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November Ainslee's

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WILLIAM J. LOCKE

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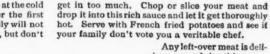
By MARY JANE McCLURE

ANY housekeepers look helplessly at the cold roast beef, lamb, etc., left after the first meal. They know that the family will not relish a dinner made from its cold slices, but don't know what else can be done

with it.

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DEPARTMENT 43

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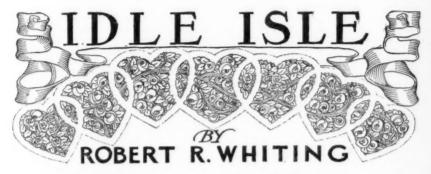
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AINSLEE'S

VOL. XXVI.

OCTOBER, 1910.

No. 3.



CHAPTER I.



WEN shaded his eyes with his hand and gazed across the water at the little patch of sand, rocks, and scrubby trees on their starboard.

"Who lives on that island?" he asked, noticing a rough pine cabin, half hidden in the brush.

"No one," answered the grizzled son of Connecticut at the tiller. "They generally rent it to summer folks later on."

It might have been Stevenson's Treasure Island, thought Owen. Or Crusoe's land. Or perhaps the rocky isle to which Monte Cristo swam.

"Would these burglars who have been robbing the summer residences along the coast be likely to bury their booty there? The Stamford police think they've been operating from a launch," suggested Owen hopefully.

"What in thunder would they bury their stuff out there for?" answered the captain, with disgust.

But Owen was not listening. He was dreamily picturing the island as a kingdom. The little pine cabin was a palace, the gorgeous palace of a great and powerful monarch who reigned wisely and

well until, right at the very zenith of his power, he was suddenly dethroned by the boat's bumping into the dock. Owen scrambled to his feet, overpaid the boatman, and started for the depot.

"Newspaper reporter from New York," the boatman informed the dock loungers. The city editor who had sent Owen up there was of the same opinion. As a matter of fact, they were right. But as a matter of fancy, which is often just as real a thing as fact, they were very far from right.

What Owen really was, as a matter of fancy, was a great and splendid monarch who disguised himself as a lowly newspaper man that he might mingle among his humble subjects, much as those other erratic rulers, James V, the Merrie Monarch of Scotland, Haroun Al Raschid, Caliph of Bagdad, and Stevenson's Prince Florizel, of Bohemia, had done before him.

That no taint of commercialism might be attached to his royal person by unfriendly historians of posterity he distributed the greater part of the payenvelope pittance that was forced upon him once a week, as largesse to his landlady and the little Italian restaurant where he took his meals.

Where was this mighty monarch's

vast domain? Well, its boundary lines have never been exactly defined, but in a general, hazy sort of way it may be said to have been bounded on the north by the Saga of Eric the Red, on the south by Dumas, on the east by the Thousand and One Nights' Entertainment, and on the west by Stevenson and Scott.

The day following Owen's trip up the Sound was Friday, Owen's day off. When he returned to his lodging house after a light luncheon of risotto, spa-ghetti, and red wine—he had been reading Dumas last, and it was but natural that His Most Christian Majesty of France should abstain from meat on Friday-his landlady told him that there was a gentleman upstairs who wanted to see him "on something

important right away."

The visitor was a serious-looking young man with just a smattering of straw-colored hair on his bulging pate. He wore glasses of different thicknesses, which would have given his pale-gray eyes an almost comical dissimilarity had anything comical been possible in such a very, very serious face. Owen had never seen the man before, but from his experience as a reporter he knew him for a law clerk even before he told him that he was

Having introduced himself, the visitor launched forth upon a long statement in legal dialect, from which, by translating it into simple English as best he could, Owen gathered that a bachelor uncle whom he hadn't seen since his mother's death had just died, leaving him thirty thousand dollars.

There were formidable-looking, typewritten papers to be signed. Our monarch made a show of reading them through with understanding, but gathered little of their purport. Ordinarily they would have been matters to be referred to his prime minister, but even Owen could hardly be expected to conjure up a prime minister who could for one instant endure under the cold, prosaic gaze of that serious-faced law clerk.

For several minutes after his depar-

ture Owen sat in silence, puffing on his pipe, vaguely trying to bring himself to an exact realization of what had happened. His uncle was dead. Of that there was no question. Owen felt that he should feel sorry. But he really had seen so very little of this old uncle who had left him thirty thousand dollars that it is not at all surprising that the one or two thousand dollars of genuine sorrow that he was able to muster up should have been diluted with twentyeight or twenty-nine thousand dollars' worth of gratitude.

Suddenly he straightened up. Thirty thousand dollars! A picture had flashed across his mind. He saw a little patch of sand and rocks and scrubby trees—a little island kingdom. He saw a rude pine cabin, half buried in the brush-a palace awaiting its rightful king. Thirty thousand dollars!

Not an overpowering sum, you may say, to one who has had command of the combined riches of Spain, Crœsus, France, The Forty Thieves, King Solomon's Mines, England, Montezuma, Midas, and the Kimberly diamond fields. Still, thirty thousand dollars is one hundred and fifty thousand francs, or fifteen million centimes, or fifteen billion trekas- Why not make the treka his standard of currency? The word sounds as though it might really be the name of a coin, and fifteen billion is a great deal to have of anything -even of paltry trekas.

And what though it really were only thirty thousand dollars? The national debt of Great Britain is \$3,885,166,333 -he had recently looked it up for the "Queries and Answers" column-so that with thirty thousand dollars his little island kingdom would be \$3,885,-196,333 richer than the greatest naval

power in the world.

So, at least, reasoned Owen, called by himself upon his uncle's death to ascend a throne.

CHAPTER II.

There were several obligations arising from the death of his benefactor that Owen was called upon to perform. He had to have black bands sewn on

all his coat sleeves for the ninety days' period of mourning decreed by court upon the death of a member of the royal family; he had to hand in his resignation to the newspaper for which he, in the garb of a humble reporter, had so long worked; he had to answer a long letter of unclish advice from a surviving uncle. These, and a score of other little duties out of the way, Owen set out to ascend his throne.

The royal island, investigation disclosed, was owned by one Miss Prudence Foster, who lived on the mainland. No, she told Owen, the cabin he had noticed on the island had not yet been taken for the summer. She was willing either to rent it by the season or to sell-if she could get her price. With rare business sagacity for one of royal blood, Owen decided to reign one season on trial before purchasing the kingdom outright. In recognition of her zeal in his interest he made Miss Foster a grant of forty-five million trekas, payable in three monthly installments, or, as the Connecticut colloquialism has it, paid her thirty dollars a month rent.

Moving from castles in Spain to an island in Long Island Sound is no easy matter, as Owen soon found out. Not that the faded old tapestries and the rich old-gold and wine-colored hangings, the Velasquezs, and the Murillos were ever any trouble; such treasures he always carried in his head. But the cot with its spring and bedding, his trunk and valise, the pots and pans and provisions, and the can of gasoline—he prided himself particularly upon having remembered that the cabin stove was one of those portable gasoline affairs-all these had to be loaded into a wagon and driven first up the Boston road a couple of miles and thence down the lane to the shore. There they were dumped out on a ramshackle dock and reloaded into a catboat that Owen had subsidized for the occasion.

"Umph!" grunted the weather-beaten captain of the catboat, critically surveying the label on one of the cans he was handling. "There warn't no need in yer bringin' canned lobster, 'lessn' ye

like it better canned. I get lobsters 'most every day right off yer island there, an' whenever ye want any fresh ones jest sing out some mornin' when I'm takin' up the pots, an' I'll row over."

Owen thanked him graciously, too graciously, in fact, for the captain seemed to gather that his highness would have no further use for the canned lobster, and, separating it from the rest of the conglomeration, stowed it carefully away in the bow.

"Didn't old lady Foster rent ye the cabin furnished?" asked the captain hopefully, as he disentangled the cot. "There's a better bed'n this un out there already, less'n she's taken it out since last summer."

"Why—er—I rather like to sleep on a cot, you see," explained Owen, mindful of the fate of his canned lobster.

"Wal, wal. No accountin' for tastes," admitted the captain cheerfully. "Goin' in for cookin' on quite a scale, ain't ye? Wal, there we be!" This last he punctuated by dropping Owen's valise on top of the pans.

A minute later they were tacking out into the Sound against a fresh sea breeze. The captain sat at the tiller. From time to time he looked up, and, as sailormen do, regarded nothing in particular very intently. Owen, perched on his trunk, absently fondled a coffee percolator. He was gazing dreamily back at the great republic that had been his boyhood home. A feeling of sadness, almost of regret, stole over him.

He drew a deep breath.

The exhilarating salt air lifted him out of his memories of the days that had been, and faced him toward the future. He turned, and off the port bow beheld the little island—his little island—looming up less and less little. A thrilling sense of 'pride, ambition, responsibility swept through him. It was King Owen who dropped the coffee percolator that he might shade his eyes the better to survey his realm.

"Is there any other name for it than just 'the island'?" he asked finally.

"None that I ever heerd of."

"Then I shall call it Idle Isle. Idle Isle—that would make a fitting name

for it."

"Fust rate. Leastwise I never heerd of the durn place ever doin' anything—except in August; then the well goes dry sometimes." The captain chuckled at his little pleasantry. "An' now, sonny, if you'll jest hike that centreboard up as high as she'll go—no, no; there, that's the one. Now set back here in the stern, an' we'll see how close in we can run. We could make a landin' round by the rocks on the other side, but if you don't mind takin' off yer shoes an' socks it'll be easier wadin' in with all this truck than hikin' it up over the island through all that brush."

Owen did not mind it. In fact, a few minutes later, when he and the captain were splashing through the shallow water together, he experienced a peculiar sense of enjoyment. The captain, peaceful old Connecticut pirate that he was, appeared to Owen's eyes a composite reincarnation of Morgan, Kidd, the notorious Blackbeard, and their like, while the book-weighted steamer trunk that they struggled with between them became an iron-bound treasure chest laden with pieces of

eight.

"Steady there, son," admonished the captain, as Owen winced. "This bottom'll cut yer feet up consid'rable un-

til they get hardened to it."

When the last load had been dumped upon the beach they proceeded to install the things in the cabin. No sooner had they entered the door than the captain's searching eye singled out a small wooden bed standing on its side in the farthest corner.

"There's that bed I was tellin' ye about. Looks like a pretty good un, don't she? I don't suppose ye'll have any use for that cot ye brought along

now, will ye?"

Owen regarded the bed critically. In its day it must have been a triumph of the wood grainer's art, but the startling red rose with blue leaves that was stenciled on the headboard scarcely seemed conducive to placid dreams. Moreover the bed itself somehow gave one the discomfiting impression that in the long run it would be more highly treasured by the entymologist than by the tired layman in search of sleep.

Owen shook his head.

"Isn't there any way of getting that thing out of here? Couldn't you take

it away?"

"'Tisn't such a very apt-lookin' bed, after all, is it?" said the captain, with rapt gaze at the red and blue rose on the headboard. "I suppose I could manage to take it along, if ye don't think the old lady would kick."

"Oh, that's all right. If Miss Foster objects I'll get her a new one," said Owen lightly, little realizing that it is no easy matter in these days of inartistic commercialism to pick up grained wooden beds with stenciled decorations.

That matter out of the way, the captain started in to show Owen the various little things about his domain that it was necessary he should know. Back of the cabin there was a hole in the sand, lined and covered with boards. This was his cold storage. The iceman would leave ice for him over on the mainland whenever he left word the day before, and he could row over and get it. He'd find the rowboat tied up just the other side of that point of rock to the east there. The well was in the centre of the island up among the trees; if he'd follow that path up the slope he couldn't miss it. There were plenty of clams to be had for the digging down on the beach. Fiddler crabs were plentiful around to the north, the captain assured him, "an' if ye'll jest remind me some time when I'm bringin' ye over lobsters I'll show ye an old wreck out vonder a ways where the blackfish bite so fast ye wonder they don't all die of dyspepsy."

Owen thanked him and asked him how much he owed him for his after-

noon's work.

"Wal, there was the loadin' on an' bringin' here, an' the wadin' ashore with all that heavy truck, an'—let's see—then there's takin' that old brokendown bed away, an'—wal, d'ye think two dollars' 'd be too much?"

Owen assured him that that was most reasonable, and for all his many kindnesses gave him an extra dollar, which caused the genial old pirate qualms of conscience—that he hadn't ventured upon a higher figure in the first place.

When Owen had put the cabin into some semblance of habitableness, he sat himself down on his doorstep, and, elbows on knees, gazed contentedly out upon the water. The rapidly lowering sun threw a glittering path of gold across from the mainland to his island. Gold almost at his very threshold; gold that would buy everything that man under the sun could dream of. And when the sun was set and the gold was spent, what mattered it? The morrow would lay new and different gold at his palace gates with which to purchase new and different things to be found in new and different dreams.

Owen was tired and hungry; too tired and not hungry enough to attempt mastering the intricacies of the gasoline stove that evening. So he made a supper of crackers and deviled ham, and washed it down with a bottle of beer that he had cooled in the wet sand.

Before lying down for the night, he dragged the head of his cot across the open door, that he might look out upon the moonlit Sound and draw the fresh salt breeze deep into his lungs.

Lulled by the gentle swish-swish of the water upon the beach, he soon fell from thinking of how happy he was and how happy he always would be into pleasant dreams of palaces, and pirates, and princesses, and pilgrimages. Finally a strange thing happened. In the middle of an eloquent appeal to his army before the walls of Jerusalem, he was interrupted by the labored puffing of a freight engine. He paused to listen. A hand shot out from behind him and drew a dagger twice across his face. He could feel the hot blood streaming down his cheek.

Ugh! He awoke all cold and clam-

A rowdy Irish terrier of a dog, panting like the labored puffing of a freight engine, stood with his forelegs upon the edge of Owen's cot, For the third time

he drew his wet tongue across Owen's cheek, as much as to say:

"Come, come! Broad daylight! Time to get up!"

CHAPTER III.

Owen sprang out of bed, pulled on his bathing suit in spite of the dog's best efforts, and rushed down the beach, out into the cool water until it was deep enough for him to dive. He emerged puffing, and spluttering, and tingling with exhilaration. The dog was tearing around through the shallow water, shaking an important item of Owen's underwear as though they were his worst enemy. Owen gave chase.

Up and down the beach, in and out of the water, they ran. Then, just as Owen seemed assured of victory, the dog suddenly shot to one side, and tore past the cabin up the path that led to the well. Owen scrambled after him in wild pursuit, unmindful of the brambles that scratched his legs and pricked him through his bathing suit.

At the top the dog suddenly stopped, and, with the trophies of the chase still gripped firmly in his jaws, calmly sat on his haunches, regarding Owen with malicious triumph. A moment later Owen, too, stopped suddenly, and gasped. He felt very much as Robinson Crusoe must have felt upon discovering those strange footprints in the sand, for a tousled head of golden hair under certain circumstances can be just as disconcerting to a young man of twenty-five as the impress of a cannibal's number eleven-C is to an adventurous sailorman.

This golden-crowned Rebecca raised her head from the well and tossed her hair back from her face. And miracle of miracles! It was just such a face as one always expects to find under just such a head of hair, and seldom does find. Has not the reader, some Sunday in early youth, centred his worship throughout an entire church service upon a head of beautiful golden hair several pews in front of him, only to find, when the long-awaited benedic-

tion is over, that his devotion has been wasted on a sallow face with colorless lips and faded blue eyes? No? Then

the reader is a woman.

Owen tried to apologize, but only flushed and stammered unintelligibly. Divers thoughts surged through his mind in the next few seconds with the rapidity that the incidents of a lifetime are supposed to flash through the brain of a drowning man. He realized that some alien had invaded his domainsome very beautiful alien; that she wore neither shoes nor stockings; that a short skirt and a man's sweater are very becoming to some women, and that hair the color of gold, when moist with sea air, takes on, in certain lights, something of the soft greenish tinge of old gold.

The lady glanced down at the dog, who had been trying vainly to attract her attention for some time. He was holding that which belonged to Owen

up to her as an offering.

"Drop it!" she commanded. Owen derived a little comfort from the fact that she said 'it" and not "them." "Drop it, Mugs!"

Mugs obediently laid his booty at her feet and looked up at her for approval.

With a sudden realization of just what had happened, she bent low over the well and began to crank furiously. Her shoulders shook—from cold, Owen tried hard to hope, but he feared the worst, that she had a sense of humor.

When she raised her head again her mouth was serious, but little divvles of merriment were dancing in the cor-

ners of her eyes.

"Why," she ventured, "you must be the man, the 'such-a-gentlemanly young man,' that Miss Foster told us was coming to take the cabin."

Owen admitted that it was to him that the such-a-ladylike Miss Foster

must have referred.

"We've taken the bungalow—that's the shanty on the other side of the island," the lady volunteered. "It's farther from the well, and we don't get the sunsets, but it's larger and has a better beach."

Owen now remembered that Miss

Foster, throughout the negotiation of the treaty between them, had always been careful to refer to the property under discussion as "the cabin." That he should have taken it for granted that "the cabin" included the entire island was certainly not Miss Foster's fault,

"Won't you let me carry that water down for you?" asked Owen, taking up

the bucket.

"Why, that's awfully good of you, Mother's waiting for it to make the coffee with. I suppose you had yours ages ago?"

"No, indeed. I was just taking my dip when your dog-er-we were play-

ing together and-"

"Then breakfast with us. We'll probably have to see a good deal of each other, and we might as well start right in getting used to it now."

Three days later Owen thought of a very pretty reply to this, but at the time he could only accept with thanks.

As they came into view of the bungalow he caught a glimpse through the back door of a grizzly-haired, severefaced woman breaking eggs into a frying pan. He realized with considerable discomfort that he was in his bathing suit.

"Well, what in the name of goodness has been keeping you so long?" If a dill pickle could talk it would certainly be in just such a voice as hers. Catching sight of Owen, she came to the door. "Humph!"

"Mother," said the younger woman, unperturbed, "this is the 'such-a-gentlemanly young man' that Miss Foster

spoke of. I found him-"

"My name," Owen started to say,

"No, no, no," she gayly entreated. "You mustn't tell us your name. It might be Travers Sinclair, and then we should have to look up to you; or it might be John Boggs, and then we shouldn't. Just put the water inside the door there, and come in and help set the table. Names don't mean anything, anyway. People's last names come down to them from ancestors whom they're probably not in the least like, and first names are given us when

we're so young that our parents haven't the slightest idea whether we will grow up to be appropriate to them or not. The most deceitful man I ever knew was named Frank. You'll find the forks and things in that starch box on the shelf. I think it will be lots more fun for each to find out what the other is like first and then pick out names that are suitable, don't you?"

"I do, lady," agreed Owen, with a low bow.

Once seated at breakfast with the deal table to screen his legs, he recovered somewhat from his embarrassment. He soon saw that mother's bark was worse than her bite: he decided that she was one of those elderly creatures who can't help doing good for others, their very worst intentions to the contrary. In spite of this charitable opinion, however, Owen found himself thinking, whenever he glanced at the younger woman, what a wonderful man her father must have been, both physically and temperamentally.

"Are you going over to Soroton for the mail this morning?" snapped the Dragon. Owen had already entered into the game of choosing suitable

names for people.

"Oh, I simply can't row that old boat another stroke, mother. Look at my poor blistered hands." She held the palms outward for inspection. were very nicely shaped little hands.

"Why, I was going over for my mail," said Owen, which was news to himself as well as to the others, "and I can get yours just as easily as not.'

"Oh, will you? But no; you'd have to know our names then, and that wouldn't do at all. I have a plan; you may row me over, if you will, and we'll go together. You can go over to the cabin and get some clothes on just as soon as you have helped with the dishes. You'd better bring our boat around on your way back. You'll find it in the inlet just beyond that clump of trees. It's better than your boat. We changed just before you came."

Owen did as he was bid. He donned a carefully pressed brown serge suit, crimson silk socks, a tan silk shirt, and,

after three or four unsatisfactory experiments, the narrow crimson tie that had been his choice in the first place.

He picked his way around the edge of the island until he found the boat. While he was sponging the water out of it he heard a slight brushing sound in the shrubbery above, and, looking up, saw the lady coming toward him. She had put on shoes and stockings, and her hair was mussily draped about her head in some becoming way, but she still wore the short skirt and sweater in which he had first seen her.

"I had forgotten that it was low tide when I told you to bring the boat around to the bungalow," she explained. "You can't make a good land-

ing there."

She noticed Owen's clothes. Then she glanced down at her own. "Oh, dear! We can't go into the

village this way, you know."
"Why not? You really look perfectly charming just as you are," gallantly assured her.

"Me? Of course I do. But you! You look like an artificial palm in a tropical garden. Haven't you a pair of old flannel trousers and a sweater or something? Never mind, though, it would take too long. We'll go the way . we are this time."

Just as they had pushed off there was a wild crackling in the brush, and the same unconventional dog that had introduced them to each other broke through, rushed down the embankment, and splashed frantically out after

"Nice old puppy dog," said the lady, lifting him into the boat. "And did you want to come to Soroton, too?"

Mugs gave his stump of a tail a couple of affirmative wags, and then, after critically surveying Owen with his sad, brown eyes, shook himself violently, bespattering that young man generously.

"Even Mugs doesn't approve of your

make-up," laughed the lady.
"What kind of a dog are you, anyway?" demanded Owen, stopping to mop himself off with a buff and white handkerchief.

"Mugs," said the lady, holding his face up so that she could look into his eyes, "you may inform the very well-dressed young gentleman that your mother was an Irish terrier of high degree. We thought your father was, too, but I fear he was only your stepfather."

If this boat was better than his, thought Owen, as he pulled awkwardly at the splintered oars, the kingdom of Idle Isle could hardly be said to rank among the world's great naval powers. However, they finally managed to reach shore. Then a lazy, happy trudge in-

land to the village.

Mugs darted hither and thither after butterflies, suddenly stopping from time to time to sniff critically at some one of the thousand smells with which earth compensates dog for his exclusion from heaven. The lady delighted in the gold of the sunlight through the trees, in the whiteness of the fleecy clouds floating across the clear blue sky above them, and in the freshness and beauty of nature all about them. Owen rejoiced in the gold of the lady's hair, in the creamy softness of her skin, and in the blue of her blue, blue eyes-rejoiced in all the fresh, wholesome beauty of the lady at his side.

The village post office brought him

back to earth.

"You wait here a moment so you won't hear the name when I ask for our mail," she told him. "Then when I come out you can get yours."

A moment later she came out with three or four letters. One of them she had opened and was reading.

"You don't mind, do you?" she

asked.

"Not half as much as you seem to," smiled Owen, for from her expression the letter might have contained a proposal from some one for whom she did not care or news of the engagement of some one for whom she did.

During the trip back she seemed thoughtful and depressed. Owen was sympathetically silent. It was high tide when they reached the island, and, by giving the boat a good start and then throwing their weight in the stern, they

managed to make a landing on the beach in front of the bungalow.

The Dragon accepted the letters addressed to her, and, after carefully examining the writing on each, laid them aside for some future occasion when her curiosity would have a keener appetite.

"Who is yours from?" she demanded, catching sight of the crumpled let-

ter in the lady's hand.

"A letter from Hammy. He expects to be up this way with his yacht before long, and will be delighted to have us join him on a two weeks' cruise. I wonder"—the lady looked the older woman straight in the eye and spoke with threatening calmness—"how he found out where I was? Who could have given him my address?"

"I gave him your address," snapped the Dragon defiantly. "He asked me for it, and I'd've been very rude if I hadn't given it to him. I think you're very ungrateful to him after all his

many kindnesses."

The lady turned on her heel, and walked down the beach toward Owen.

"Is-" he began.

"Is she always like that?" which wasn't at all what Owen had started to ask. "Yes, always. She has a very even disposition."

These events, here chronicled for the first time, though trivial in themselves, may be justly considered the seedlings from which sprang the relentless war subsequently waged between Owen, of Idle Isle, and Hamilton Rausch, one of the powerful kings of finance.

CHAPTER IV.

Instead of feeling disappointment upon finding that he was to rule over West Idle Isle only, and not over the entire island, as he had at first led himself to suppose, Owen really welcomed the existence of the kingdom on his east.

An entente cordiale between the two countries was established at the very beginning. Each pressed the other's navy into service as occasion arose, and each found not the slightest difficulty in floating loans of butter, eggs, canned stuff, postage stamps, or cooking utensils with the other's government upon

the shortest notice.

Owen first broached the subject of the island's government one day when they were digging for clams. As she knelt upon the sand with the sunlight bringing out the gold in her tousled hair, there flashed through his mind something he had once read somewhere to the effect that "a woman's hair is her crowning beauty."

hair is her crowning beauty."
"Your highness," declaimed Owen, inspired by the reference to crowning, no doubt, "I have been keeping something from you. I am a king—King Owen, of West Idle Isle, and all these broad acres—you can't see past the well, can you? Well, then, all these broad acres, as far as the eye can reach,

are my domains."

The lady looked up at him wonder-

ingly.

"If your majesty would exchange the crown of your head for a straw hat and go over and sit in the shade for a while I think you would gradually come back

to Connecticut."

Come back to Connecticut? Owen vowed that he wouldn't relinquish his little kingdom for all the Connecticuts in the world; no, not if he had to stand bareheaded in the blazing sun all the rest of his days. He described his exile in New York, where, disguised as a humble reporter, he had bided his time until the people of his brain, upon the death of his uncle, had called him to his own, the kingdom of West Idle Isle. As he warmed up to his subject, the lady, too, caught the spirit of the game, and clapped her hands delightedly.

"Oh, how delicious! Once, when I was a little girl, I was the fairy queen in a Christmas pantomime and wore a pasteboard crown. Ever since then I've always had a longing to be a really-and-truly, sure-enough queen. And at last I actually am one. I, our royal highness of—what is it? East Idle Isle? And what shall I call myself? Let's see. Queen—"

"Titania?" suggested Owen, gazing out over the water.

"No-o. That sounds too much like an excursion boat or the queen of the Asbury Park carnival. How would Queen Olivia be?" she asked rather doubtfully, gazing down at an empty bottle that had once contained queen olives. "But, no; I have it. Eileen. It goes so well with Idle Isle. Eileen, of East Idle Isle. And Mugs shall be the cannille."

The lawmaking of the two countries was done as occasion required by their respective governments in joint session. For example, the lobsterman, after his first few commercial invasions of the island, felt safe in confiding to Owen that "them little fellers," which the laws of the great commonwealth on the mainland prohibited one from dealing in, were really much sweeter and tenderer than lobsters of legal size.

"But I can't risk sellin' 'em on shore, so they ain't no use to me," the captain frankly admitted. "Out here, though, there ain't nobody to be the wiser, an' if you want 'em I can jest as well let ye have 'em for the same price I've been chargin' ye for them big coarse

uns."

Owen thanked the captain, and promised to think it over. Later he laid the matter before the sovereign of the sister kingdom.

"Somehow, it wouldn't seem quite right, though, would it?" he concluded. "It would be breaking the law, you

know.'

"Breaking what law? The laws of the United States of America? Well, what's the use of having a government of your own if you can't make your own laws? You can do as you like, of course; that's your affair. But the people of *East* Idle Isle shall have their sea food in any sizes they wish, from a lobster-in-arms up."

Owen, rather than insist upon anything that might engender strained relations between two friendly powers, finally gave in, and from that time on boiled "shorts," whenever obtainable, formed the pièce de résistance at all

state banquets.

To show that he bore no resentment over his defeat in the matter, Owen almost smoked himself to death obtaining enough cigarette coupons for a set of nut crackers and nut picks with which to eat the new delicacy.

Over the unwritten laws of the two kingdoms, such as those against the wasting of well water and going in bathing too soon after meals, there had never been the slightest difference of

opinion.

For almost a month the two sovereigns enjoyed happy and prosperous reigns. They shared sunshine, and moonlight, and tempest, and butter, and jam between them. They rowed together, swam together, read together, and, most significant of all, did noth-

g together.

One morning when they were out in H. M. S. Barnacle Belle, fishing over the wreck of which the captain had told them, Eileen, glancing up from her line, was startled by the appearance of the sky.

"Look!" she said, with a shade of alarm. "How black it's getting."

"We won't get any of it," Owen assured her. "It's passing around to the south of us."

A straggling black cloud on the outskirts of the storm floated across the sun. Placing a forefinger thoughtfully on his brow, Owen dramatically inquired:

"I wonder what I could have said To drive away the sun? And see—such angry-looking clouds! I wonder what I've done?"

"Don't be foolish, Owen. Look!" He followed the direction of her eyes. A graceful white yacht was steaming majestically out of the storm, down upon their little island. "Oh, it can't be. It—it is!" she concluded in a voice full of disappointment. "It's the Merry Widow."

Owen remembered that letter "from Hammie" that had arrived on the first day of his reign, and became sympathetically despondent. Yes, the yacht was slowing up. His heart fell. They had cast anchor.

"Come," Eileen told him, without en-

thusiasm. "We must be getting back to the bungalow. I'd forgotten all about poor mother. She'll be worried to death for fear we were caught in the storm. Oh, look—a rainbow!"

Owen glanced up at it.

"Good! That's a sign of hope." Then he glowered at the yacht. "Things may come out all right, after all."

"What things may come out all right?" she demanded, with a trace of resentment. Just because she rather liked this young man was no reason for his presuming to take such an intimate interest in her affairs.

"Why—er—your mother," stammered Owen, flushing, as he hauled in the jagged stone that served them for an anchor. "Maybe she didn't notice

the storm."

This, of course, was absurd, as any one at all familiar with dragons knows. She was on the beach waiting for them.

"Well!" she snapped. "It's a won-der—"

"You see, I've brought her home to you all safe and sound," interrupted Owen hastily, as he helped Eileen out. "And now I must hurry back to the cabin. I—" The rest was lost in a mumble. He undoubtedly felt that any interference on his part in the internal politics of another kingdom might be considered meddlesome.

After cooking and eating his midday meal he sat himself down in his doorway, and proceeded with much thoroughness to hate the white yacht at long distance. When he had mentally disabled her with a well-placed broadside, made her owner walk the plank, and left her in flames, he realized that, instead of gracefully submitting to her fate, she was actually lowering a boat. Two sailors helped a man in dark clothes down the ladder. The distance was too great for Owen to see distinctly, but he entertained strong hopes that the man was short and dumpy.

The sailors were pulling with strong, even strokes for Idle Isle. If they should dare to invade his kingdom, thought Owen—but, of course, it was East Idle Isle for which they were

headed, and if Queen Eileen were willing that they should make a landing, what business was it of his? If only he held sway over the entire island! He fell to thinking of England and Scotland, and how, through the n.arriage of Margaret, daughter of Henry VII, to James the Something-or-Other, of Scotland, they eventually became one kingdom. Great Britain! United Idle Isle! History repeats itself. But Eileen? That very morning she had as much as told him to mind his own business, and she certainly was not the lady to submit to a distasteful marriage for any mere reasons of state. Besides-

The boat from the Merry Widow was now close enough for him to see that the man in dark clothes was short

and dumpy.

That gave him some consolation as he watched it disappear around behind

the eastern shore.

For a time he sat and waited for the boat to return, hoping against hope that Eileen would plead fatigue from the morning's storm and send the invader about his business. But no such luck. Before long he heard voices and sounds of merriment from the other side of the island. Fool he had been, he told himself, to have expected anything else! Well, if she found any pleasure in talking to that kind of an ass she was welcome to it. As for Owen, just the sound of that fat, wealthy laugh made him sick. He was going for a row where he wouldn't hear it.

But his boat. For the first time he remembered that when they had taken refuge from the storm he had left the good ship Barnacle Belle grounded a dozen yards from shore. Since then the tide had risen, and now there was no sign of her. Oh, well, he would borrow the neighboring kingdom's navy. Her majesty had the boat from the Merry Widow at her service, and when that departed he would return.

He threaded his way through the brush to the cove that served East Idle Isle as a navy yard. As he was pushing off, another peal of laughter rang out from the direction of the bungalow. "I suppose I really ought to row around and ask their permission," he tried to make himself believe. But the real reason for his going was the same reason for which any little boy picks the court-plaster off his cuts, plays with fire, or leaves the solace of the punch bowl to watch the little girl whom he likes best dance with the little boy whom she likes best.

When Owen came in sight of the bungalow, Eileen and the invader were sitting on the beach. The Dragon, occupied with her knitting, in turn occupied a camp stool a short distance off. Eileen was the first to catch sight of

him.

"Hello," she called out.

"I just wanted to ask you," began Owen, with cold dignity, "if I might take the—..."

"Come on ashore and tell us here."
Owen landed. As long as the lady
had asked him to, what else could he
do? And as long as he had to land at
all, why not do it cheerfully? He did.

"Mr. Rausch," said Eileen, "this is the sovereign of the other half of our

little island, Mr.-er-King."

"I'm very glad to meet you, Mr. King," said Mr. Rausch, extending a moist, flabby hand for Owen to shake. "Quite an appropriate name for a sovereign, I'm sure."

"That's what I thought," Eileen told

Owen in an aside.

"I just came over for a second," Owen explained, "to ask if I might

take your boat. Mine-"

"Why, certainly. It doesn't make the slightest difference to me which boat we go in as long as we go. I was beginning to think that you had entirely forgotten that you'd promised to take me rowing."

"I certainly wouldn't forget that," said Owen, puzzling his brain in an effort to remember it. "Are you all

ready to start?"

"If you're going any place in particular," suggested Mr. Rausch hopefully, "I should be very glad to take you in my boat. There's plenty of room for all of us."

"Why, that's awfully good of you,

but Mr. King and I were just going for a little row. We'll probably be back before you leave, but in any case, you'll be over again soon, won't you?"

A flush fought its way through Mr. Rausch's thick skin. The Dragon

scowled.

Owen and Eileen rowed in silence for some minutes. From time to time Eileen looked up at him with an amused expression. Laughter, which her mouth denied, found an exit through her eyes.

"I want to ask you something," she said at last. "Honest Injun, now, hadn't you really forgotten all about our engagement to go rowing this after-

noon?"

Owen, his face a picture of injured innocence, was about to enter an indignant denial, when something in Eileen's eyes warned him, and they both burst

into gleeful laughter.

Some minutes later, Owen, resting lazily on his oars, had the satisfaction of watching the two white-clad sailors from the Merry Widow row their precious burden back to the yacht. He felt that at the first clash of arms victory had been his, and his spirits rose in consequence. Eileen, too, was in rare good humor, and when at last she feared that they "really must be getting back now," the sun was sinking rapidly over the mainland.

Rowing back, with the lady in the stern silhouetted against the blazing ball of blood-orange fire, and the boat gliding along before a shimmering path of gold, Owen was too happy to speak. Once the lady glanced behind her.

"The world is a stage," she said, thinking aloud, "and we have the centre of it. See"—she nodded toward the long, narrow cone of wavering gold—"we are right in God's spot light."

Irreverent? Ah, but she said this out upon the cool water of the Sound, beneath the open sky, in the glow of the setting sun. And, like as not, you who hear her say it are sitting in a mission chair by the light of a sixteen-candle-power incandescent light in a stuffy city room. It makes a difference.

For a long time that night Owen,

pen in hand, sat gazing out into the moonlit water, seeking inspiration to write to a man on Broadway for a fresh supply of tobacco. But somehow his thoughts wandered. Perhaps it was the moon; perhaps he was still under the influence of that sunset ride upon the water; perhaps he had just finished smoking. At any rate, the paths through which his pen wandered led to nothing like tobacco.

THE SONG OF THE MOONBEAM

Off to the Isle of Love, dear,
We'll go by the Moonbeam Trail,
O'er the silvery ripples frail
Lit by the moonlight pale—
Off to the Isle of Love, dear,
Away from the Sorrow Vale.
Come to the Isle of Love
We'll go by the Moonbeam Trail,

Mine eyes shall gaze into thine eyes,
By the light of thy golden hair.
My heart shall beat with thy heart
In that Land of Love—out there,
In that—

But just because our monarch in a moment of weakness lapsed into verse is no reason why his failing should be exploited here. Such things are for the pages of "secret memoirs" rather than of legitimate history.

Nor was Owen the only sovereign strangely affected. While he was writing, Eileen lay in bed, looking out at the starlit sky and thinking.— But never mind what she was thinking, for not even in fiction, much less in history, should a gentleman writer lead his reader into a lady's bedroom after she has retired.

CHAPTER V.

Early the following morning the captain rowed in from his catboat with H. M. S. Barnacle Belle in tow.

"Must've pulled loose in the storm yesterday," he inferred. "A feller found it floatin' bottom up 'way down near Stamford. He wasn't goin' to let me have it at first, but I told him I thought 'twould be wuth a couple of dollars to him if he did—old lady Foster'd make ye pay ten or more for losin' it—so he decided to take a chance

an' let me fetch it along. One of the oars was gone, so I brought ye a new one, knowin' as how ye'd probably wanter use it pretty soon."

"What's the man's name?" asked Owen, after he had thanked the captain. "Where can I find him?"

"Why, I don't rightly know as he has any place where he reg'larly hangs out. But I'll tell ye what; ye can pay me if ye like, an' I'll give it to him. I see him 'most every day."

Owen produced the suggested two dollars, thereby regaining possession of his navy. The captain, after pocketing the money, hesitated a moment.

"Say," he said, "do you know them people on the yacht out there? I saw one of 'em comin' in here yesterday. If they're special friends of yourn, I'd be glad to do anything I could for 'em. What kind of folks are they?"

Before Owen had time to explain that the owner of the Merry Widow was a short, squat man with fishy eyes, a bald spot that sagged a bit below his hat in the back, and a mouth that would make nice legible type for a near-sighted lip reader, the captain went on to explain that he merely wanted to know whether or not it would be safe to sell him "short" lobsters.

"Very appropriate," said Owen absently. "No—er—that is, what I meant to say was that it would be perfectly safe. He's good for any amount—just rolling in money, you know."

After Mr. Rausch's first invasion of the island there was a lull in hostilities. He was a daily visitor to the court of East Idle Isle, but for several days. Owen saw little either of him or of Ouen Eileen.

Once when Mr. Rausch was being rowed out to the Merry Widow, Owen, navigating the Barnacle Belle, crossed his course and nodded. Eileen caught sight of him from the beach and whistled. Mr. Rausch, taking it for granted that the signal was for him, turned, beamed, and gayly waved a fat hand. Owen gave no sign of having heard, and rowed straight ahead.

Next morning when he went for wa-

ter, it chanced that Eileen was already at the well.

"Hello," she greeted him. "Where have you been keeping yourself lately? I whistled to you yesterday, and you wouldn't look."

"I'm awfully sorry. I thought you were whistling to some one else. You know I've got a bad habit of taking it for granted whenever I hear some one whistle that it isn't for me. I try to excuse myself with the theory that the man who does turn around when he's whistled to is used to it. He or his ancestors have at some time or other worked for some one else; some one that didn't turn around when he was whistled to. Just try it the next time you're in a crowded street. Whistle and note the sort of men—"

"I most humbly beg your most gracious majesty's pardon," said Eileen, with a low curtsy. "I'll never, never offend your royal ears again." And then she added: "But Mr. Rausch turned around? And surely he isn't in the employ of any whistlers."

Owen realized that he had unintentionally been foolish, and immediately became intentionally foolish in order to carry it off.

"If Mr. Rausch turned around at the sound of a whistle it only goes to prove the truth of my theory," he declared, with mock seriousness. "He is not of royal blood. Powerful as he is in his own country, he is only one of the polloi that go to make up a great republic. While his face may assume a fine disdain when the postman's whistle sounds without his palace gate, his bourgeois soul cringes and meekly murmurs: 'Here, sir.' Take my word for it. It's true just as sure as my name is—is—er—Mr. King."

"What are you going to do to-day?"
"Well, if I can catch some fiddler crabs this morning. I'm going to try to catch some fish, and if I catch some fish, I'm going to clean them and cook them in a very nice stone oven that I shall build upon the beach. Will your royal highness condescend to partake of my humble repast? If I have any luck, I'll row 'round and—"

"Whistle for me? I shall be de-

lighted."

Owen did catch fish, did call around for Eileen, and did build an oven out of stones upon the beach. But his hopes for the joy of an hour alone with her ladyship were soon shattered. No sooner had the butter begun to sizzle well in the tin-can cover that Owen used for a frying pan, than Mr. Rausch wandered ponderously into the picture. He explained that he had just rowed over to the bungalow, and that mother had told him that he would probably find "every one over on the other side of the island."

"Come and join us," Eileen gayly invited him. "It really isn't as bad as it

looks."

"How are you?" said Owen perfunctorily, without looking up from his cooking. "There are only two forks," he mumbled to no one in particular.

"Oh, that's all right," Eileen assured him. "There's a knife. Mr. Rausch doesn't mind eating with a knife, do you, Mr. Rausch?"

Mr. Rausch declared with much dig-

nity that he had never tried it.

"All I meant was," explained Owen, getting up, "that somebody will have to go to the cabin and procure a third fork. If your highness will condescend to watch the fish I'll do it myself."

Both guests pronounced the fish delicious, this in spite of the fact that Mr. Rausch's piece had twice dropped

in the sand.

"I was just asking your mother," said Mr. Rausch, while Owen was engaged in the discouraging task of washing forks in salt water, "if you and she would take luncheon aboard the yacht with us to-morrow. There won't be any one there but—"

"Oh, goody! That will be perfect. Owen," she called, "Mr. Rausch has invited us all to take luncheon with him aboard the Merry Widow to-morrow afternoon. Won't that be simply deli-

cious?"

Owen told himself that Mr. Rausch was the sort of a man who would be sure to have a certain uncertain brand of champagne at luncheon and refer to his having it as "opening wine."

"Why, that's awfully good of you," he said, starting up from the beach,

"but really---

"But really what?" demanded Eileen, "One has so little time to one's self here on the island. I suppose you really must be here to-morrow afternoon to see that the tide changes properly."

"No," laughed Owen good-humoredly, "I was merely going to tell Mr. Rausch that, thanks to Mugs and this salt air, my clothes are hardly in a fit

condition to--'

"And they talk of women being vain! Why, nobody ever looks respectable aboard a yacht, do they, Mr. Rausch?"

And so that was settled.

In spite of his apologies, Owen, when they started for the Merry Widow next day, made a very presentable appearance for a monarch in citizen's clothes. But he was not happy, and as the day wore on he became less and less so. Eileen had invited Owen because she knew Mr. Rausch would not like it, and then was very agreeable to Mr. Rausch because she knew that Owen would not like it.

Besides the owner, the party on the Merry Widow consisted of Mr. Lambert, who wore too much jewelry and was rather good-looking in a stagy way; Mrs. Lambert, the chaperon of the party, quite appropriate in every way as the wife of Mr. Lambert; Miss Montesque, called Dolly by the others, a stunning young person with bright-red hair and a pair of dazzling dark eyes that were entirely too dressy for daytime, and, finally, young Dickie Elliott, a dissipated-looking youth who was a gentleman in spite of himself.

"Where's the rival?" Miss Montesque asked Mrs. Lambert when

luncheon was announced.

"Anything I can find for you?" inquired Owen, coming up from the rail, where he had been nursing his sulks.

"Oh, here you are. You're to sit next to me at lunch. I was afraid somebody'd tipped you off and you'd bolted. Let's go on down."

Mr. Rausch did "open wine." Eileen,

with a quick glance at Owen, protested that she really didn't care for any.

"After we had it all for you?" insisted her host, filling her glass.

"Usually, you know," put in Miss Montesque, "we seem to have most of it for Dickie Elliott."

Mr. Elliott buried his face in his glass as soon as it was filled, to cover

his embarrassment.

Throughout the luncheon Miss Montesque worked diligently to draw Owen out. Owen managed to look politely interested, but several times caught himself wondering at the peculiar shade of red she had chosen for her hair, or listening to stray snatches of the conversation that Mr. Rausch and Eileen were carrying on at the head of the

"We really need you to fill out the party," Mr. Rausch was urging Eileen. "I'd love to come, Mr. Rausch,

"Pshaw! You know very well that there isn't any reason on earth why you can't come if you want to. Your mother has just said there isn't. Maybe you've got a standing engagement to see that the tide changes properly," he

suggested sarcastically.

Owen strained his ears to hear Eileen's answer, but Miss Montesque, who had been describing a motor trip through Europe, had just reached Oberammergau, "where the people literally make a holy show of themselves, you know," and he felt called upon to

laugh appreciatively.

Mr. Rausch, when Owen next found an opportunity to glance up the table, was sulking pompously. On deck afterward he soon sought out Miss Montesque, and Owen welcomed the chance to get in a few words with Eileen. But Mr. Lambert was there before him, and not being conversant with the injustices wrought by theatrical managers upon long-suffering actors and actresses, he soon found himself dependent upon the Dragon for entertainment. That lady was in an especially unamiable frame of mind, even for a dragon, and merely snapped her jaws in monosyllabic answers.

At last Eileen decided that they must be going, and the boat was made ready. It seemed to Owen that she never would have done with saying good-by to everybody.

"This certainly has been very nice," said Owen, without in the least deceiv-

ing Mr. Rausch.

'I'm glad you liked it. We must do it again some time, Mr.—er—King." Something in the way he said "Mr.-er -King" caused Owen to glance up at him sharply. But one cannot gather much from a fishy eve that will not keep still.

The boat had almost reached the island before Eileen, Owen, or the Dra-

gon spoke.

"My, but it's good to get back to our own little kingdoms," sighed Eileen. Then, remembering that one of the Merry Widow's sailors was rowing "Still, it was really awfully them: jolly, wasn't it?"

"Awfully." Owen felt that he was using the word in its proper sense.

That evening Owen started to com-

pose an essay on "Woman."
"A woman," he wrote, "though the one poor plant that she cares for day by day may be her favorite, is never insensible to the perfume of a bouquet.

And then, unlike many men who write essays on "Woman," he very sensibly tore up what he had written.

CHAPTER VI.

With the Merry Widow gone, the sister kingdoms of Idle Isle settled back into the peace and tranquillity they had enjoyed before the invasion of the King of Finance. The Dragon, for some reason or other, seemed to snap her jaws a trifle more fiercely and to use a trifle more withering brand of fire on her tongue than formerly, but so much the better for Idle Isle. Any well-regulated kingdom that supports dragons or giants should see to it that they have the very awfulest and most ferocious brands procurable. Supposing St. George's dragon had been merely somebody's household pet that only breathed flames as a parlor trick when it wanted cookies; do you think that St. George would have so many hotels and things named after him to-day? Certainly not. And just so with the Idle Isle dragon. Had she been a nice, agreeable old lady with a passion for making afghans and blackberry mush, the history of Idle Isle might have been fully covered in the pages of an "unavailable" short story. Have patience a few chapters longer and judge for vourself.

There was one thing that Owen did not quite understand at the time. The day after the luncheon on the yacht, Eileen, meeting him on the beach, wistfully remarked: "Well, I suppose it's all ended now-we can't play king and queen any longer, and our kingdoms are just tiny little bits of Con-

necticut, after all."

"What do you mean?" demanded Owen in alarm.

"Why, now that you know all about me, it spoils the play.'

"But I don't know anything about you except that you're the most-

"You heard my name when we were introduced to the people on the Merry Widow. You couldn't help but hear it. If I'd only thought, we wouldn't have gone."

"Of course I heard your name. But Eileen is a prettier name, and I'm going to forget the other. What's in a name,

anyway?"

She regarded him with injured sur-

"You heard my name-heard it for the first time yesterday. What is in a name, anyway?" she sighed.

Owen marveled. Here was a lady who was grieved one moment because she thought he knew who she was, and who seemed equally grieved the next moment because it turned out that he didn't know who she was.

"Well, we still have our kingdoms,"

he suggested doubtfully.

"Yes, your highness, we still have our kingdoms," she gayly assured him.

The next three weeks were uneventful ones for Idle Isle. Instead of mak-

ing history, the two monarchs contented themselves with making time pass pleasantly. And then, like a bolt out of a blue sky, a bent pin in your favorite easy-chair, or anything else disagreeable and unexpected, came a letter from Owen's remaining uncle.

Owen, aside from an occasional long envelope addressed in his own hand. which indicated that some editor did not think as highly of the inclosed story as did the author, rarely received any mail. He had come to look upon the daily row over to the mainland more as a pleasant way of being with Eileen

than anything else.
"For me?" he said, with some surprise, as the postmaster handed him a letter. He examined the envelope critically. "It looks something like my uncle's writing," he told Eileen, "but he doesn't know where I am. May I look and see?"

After a preliminary glance at the signature Owen hastily ran through the

"If your highness would only pay your bills in the first place," Eileen inferred from his expression, "you wouldn't receive letters that make you look like that. But come along. Once safe in Idle Isle and all the tailors in the world can't bother you. We'll make it against the law."

"It is from my uncle," he said, ignoring her banter. He shoved the letter into his pocket. "All ready?"

She chatted gayly as they walked, calling his attention to the birds, the clouds, the smell of the sea, the wild flowers along the roadside, the soft greens of the fields, and a score of other things that caught her fancy, Owen seemed preoccupied.

"Who could have told him who I was?" he wondered absently when they

were in the boat.

Eileen regarded him searchingly. "You've had bad news. I'm sorry I guyed you. I didn't think."

He took his feelings out on the oars. They reached the island quickly.

Alone in his cabin Owen took the letter from his pocket and started to read it more carefully. Before he had gone far he suddenly crumpled it into a little ball and hurled it angrily at the gasoline range. Then he went after it, picked it up, smoothed it out, and began at the beginning all over again. One can readily understand his feelings. This time let us read the letter with him:

DEAR OWEN: When my brother, your Uncle Evan, died, I realized that you and I were the only two of the old name left. Feeling that it was partly my fault that we had not seen more of each other in the past. I determined to make amends and meet you more than halfway. Instead of responding, however, you saw fit to ignore my advances and travel your own road. As you may know. I am not the one to force myself where I am not wanted, and, of easy conscience in the knowledge that I, at least, had done my duty, I resolved to let you "stew in your own grease" as your Grandfather Jones used to say.

Things have recently come to my ears, however, that show me that I must swallow my pride and go where I am so obviously not wanted. After all, you are my sister's child, and it is for her sake rather than your own that I am doing this.

Quite by accident at my club the other day, I learned of your whereabouts, and of the actress who, with the woman posing as her mother, is endeavoring to ensnare you in her toils.

"Rausch!" exclaimed Owen, more as if it were an improper word than a proper name.

This time he tore the letter into tiny bits. He flung it from him. The little pieces of paper separated in the air, and, as though mocking him, fluttered gently to the floor with all the innocence of a stage snowfall.

Owen threw off his outer clothes. He had dressed hurriedly that morning, and his bathing suit was already on. He rushed down the beach, threw himself upon the water, and swam out with furious overhand stroke.

Rausch! Rausch! Rausch! Rausch! His hands slapped down upon the sur-The sound maddened him, and he pounded the water with renewed Rausch! Rausch! Rausch! fury. Rausch!

Childish, you say, for a mighty monarch to vent his wrath upon an innocent and unfeeling body of water? He had precedent. Xerxes, you may remember, had three hundred lashes administered to the Hellespont and a set of fetters cast into it all because it had been a little rough and had broken up And why "childish"? In his fleet. what better way can a monarch ease his anger than by taking it out on water? He hurts neither himself nor any one else, and what few dents he may make in the surface fill in again almost as soon as they are made.

In a very few minutes, Owen, exhausted and out of breath, rolled over on his back and floated calmly. He

felt better.

CHAPTER VII.

Actress? Of course she was an actress, and a mighty good actress, too. Owen had seen her several times himself and remembered her perfectly. He wondered that he had not placed her when he heard her name that day aboard the Merry Widow. He-

"By Jove!" he exclaimed aloud, just as though he had been a character in fiction instead of in history. "That explains it. No wonder she felt a bit peevish when she found that her name meant nothing to me. Even she must have some 'professional vanity,' and there I stood, a deuce before the queen of hearts, confidently assuring her that I'd never heard of her before in all my life."

He resolved to square himself with her the very next time he saw her. This happened to be early the following morning when he rowed to see if she were going into the mainland with him to get the ice.

Her manner was more restrained than usual. She even seemed rather doubtful about accompanying him until the Dragon snapped out: "Humph! It doesn't take two of you to go after ice, does it?"

"No more than it takes two of us to stay on the island," Eileen cheerfully assured her, as she climbed into the

Owen found it more difficult to tell her what he wished to tell her now that she was there to listen to it. Perhaps she did not give him the cues he had been counting upon. She sat in the stern, idly trailing her hand in the water, and gazing wistfully away, 'way off at nothing at all.

"You know," he stammered, "that is

-er-when you-

"Oh, I beg your pardon," she said, withdrawing her hand from the water and sitting around facing him. "I forgot. It makes it hard to steer when

I do that, doesn't it?"

"The day after we had luncheon on the vacht"-he was determined to have out with it-"I told you that I didn't know who you were; that when I heard your name it didn't mean anything to me. I wasn't playing fair when I said that, and now I want to 'fess up. Of course. I knew who you were all the

Spoken aloud this did not sound at all as it did when he had rehearsed it to himself. He had a strong feeling that he was making a fool of himself, and pulled viciously at the oars to hide his confusion. Owen was not very much of a diplomat as the general run of rulers goes.

Eileen regarded him thoughtfully for

a few seconds.

"Then your uncle did tell you, didn't he?" she said, more as a statement than as a question. "I wonder who told him?"

Owen felt that it would be useless to

protest.

"Some one at his club. It must have been Rausch." Then, puzzled: "But how on earth did he find out who I am? You introduced me as Mr. King, you know."

"Mother must have told him. some reason or other she does everything he asks her. But what could be his object? Why on earth should he want to-

Something in Owen's expression caused her to break off with a flush of embarrassment. She half turned and again began to trail her hand in the water.

"But how would your mother know who I was?" he wondered.

"Why, the day you rented the cabin

Miss Foster could hardly wait for you to get out of sight before she rowed over to tell us what a distinguished neighbor we were going to have. 'Such a gentlemanly young man-and some sort of a literary person, too.' even told us who your uncle was. You gave her his name as a reference or something, didn't you? Well, then, that accounts for it."

"So you have known my name all along?" said Owen, very much insaid Owen, very much iniured. "Then what, pray, was your

idea in-

"But really, Owen, it didn't have the slightest significance for me," she assured him, with a delicious trace of malice in her voice. "You see, I had never heard of you before in all my life. While my name-well, before you so gracefully took all the conceit out of me, I was vain enough to think that my name-

"Honestly, Eileen-

"Honestly, Owen-You mustn't fib. You don't do it prettily."

"But why didn't you want me to know who you were?" he asked, certain unpleasant things in his uncle's letter haunting his mind in spite of himself.

"Well, you see," she said more seriously, "from an actress' standpoint most men fall into one or the other of two classes. The first class includes the nice, gray pillars of conventionality -men like your uncle, I think-who look upon all actresses as the work of To them the very word the devil. actress is condemnation in itself. It is all very well to be entertained by actresses in public theatres set apart for that purpose, but to meet them socially! Why, your uncle-men of the class he represents, I mean-would as soon be seen coming out of a saloon."

Owen felt loval resentment at this picture of a member of his family, all the more because it was so true.

"Then there is the other type of man, the stage-door Johnnie. He holds the actress no higher than does your nice, gray pillar of conventionality. But she affects him differently. He pesters her with his attentions and boasts of his acquaintance with her."

"Rausch," muttered Owen, intent upon squaring accounts for his family. "To the Johnnie," continued Eileen, "it's 'real devilish' to know an actress.

It's the same something that makes little boys sneak off behind the barn to

smoke cigarettes.

"And that, Owen, is why I didn't want you to know who I was. How was I to guess what you would be like? If, knowing that I was on the stage, you had turned out to be either a sad gray pillar or a bad gay Johnnie, living on the same island with you all summer

would have been intolerable."

Owen had been paying as much attention to Eileen herself as to what she had been saying. The sun showed him new lights in her wonderful hair. The half-plaintive earnestness of her mood lent a new depth to her eyes. Two classes of men, had she said? So were there two classes of women; Eileen was one class, all other women were the other class. And this was the woman his uncle thought was trying to ensnare him in her toils! Would to Heaven she would try! She would find him more than eager to help her.

"You—er—your mother does not look in the least like you," which was not at all what he had started to say.

"I—er—I really couldn't find one who did," she replied, mimicking his tone and manner. Then she looked up at him and laughed. Owen was puz-

zled.

"'Mother,' you see, isn't really my mother at all," she explained. "My parents both died when I was still in school. This is just my professional 'mother.' " A little sigh of great relief escaped Owen. "You see, a girl all alone really has to have some one to protect her-a 'mother' or a husband, and of the two 'mothers' are the less expensive in the long run and very much tidier about the house. This one is really a jewel. She used to be a teacher at Abbott Academy up in Andover ages ago when my real mother went to school there, which almost makes her a sort of a very distant relation, you see. Besides, she sews and mends beautifully, and fairly bristles

with respectability. Why, even your uncle couldn't—Owen, I want you to tell me something honestly. What did your uncle say about me in his letter?"

"Why-er-"

"If you were perfectly willing to tell me I'd know that it didn't concern me in the least. But as long as you won't tell me, I'll know that it's something I have a perfect right to know." Eileen's maternal grandfather was an Irishman.

"Why, I'm perfectly willing to tell you," said Owen, with conscious gayety. "Therefore, I suppose, you won't

want to know."

"For one thing, of course, he put you in possession of the awful truth that I'm an actress. Do you think it's such a very dreadful thing for a woman to be an actress, Owen? No, no," as he was about to protest, "let me finish. Supposing it were some one you cared for very dearly—a sister, for example—would you like to see her on the stage?"

"If it were some one I cared for very dearly," answered Owen, looking deep into her eyes, "some one I simply worshiped, I do not think I should like to know that thousands of other people, for a few dollars each, could purchase the right to sit and worship her, too,"

"Yes," she went on, ignoring his explanation, "I am a bold, bad actress, and, I suppose, I am trying to lure on your uncle's precious nephew with my wicked wiles. Does he say what my object is? I do not see just what reason I could have."

Owen could not see, either. He only wished that he could furnish some good

reason.

Eileen, her chin resting on her hand, gazed thoughtfully out over the Sound.

"It has been very nice here while it lasted," she said wistfully. "It seems cruel to have to leave it all now, just as—"

"Leave it all now?" repeated Owen,

with surprise.

"Why, yes." There was a tinge of sarcasm in her voice. "You didn't suppose I could very well go on staying out here after what your uncle has said, did you? You see a woman must

have some respect for her reputation-

"But why should you go? It's all through me that things have turned out the way they have. If I hadn't had an uncle who was simple enough to listen to a beastly, slandering scandalmonger like—like— Why, if either of us is going to leave it should be I. Of course, it should."

"Oh, no. There's no reason why you should go. You're a man, and all this Eileen, "I'm coming in with you.

"It makes all the difference in the world to me," he assured her earnestly. "Besides, I—I was going to New York pretty soon, anyway, and—and—There's no reason why we should both have to go away, is there? I'll go tomorrow."

Eileen smiled at his boyishly honest attempt at deception.

"After all, you are a nice lad, Owen."

CHAPTER VIII.

After one farewell dip in the Sound next morning, Owen, of West Idle Isle, tossed his wet bathing suit in the corner with his sweater and the rest of his royal raiment, donned the summer garb of a prosperous commoner, and rowed around to the bungalow to say good-by.

"Wait until I get my hair up," called Eileen. "I'm coming in with you."

"Who, pray," she inquired, as he helped her into the boat, "did you think was going to row the navy back? Or perhaps you thought, that with the departure of your royal highness, the inhabitants of this part of the world would have no further use for boats."

Owen was forced to admit that he had not given the matter much delibera-

tion.

"I'm leaving my other things in the cabin," he said, nodding toward his suit case in the bow. "I'll be traveling incog, you know, and won't have need of them. I didn't have time to get the lobsterman to take 'em in, but they'll be all right, I guess, until I can get a chance to send out for 'em."

"I'll establish a protectorate over the

kingdom during your majesty's absence," promised Eileen.

For some reason their attempts at

gayety did not ring true.
"I feel as though I were abdicating," said Owen, looking longingly back at the little island kingdom.

"I feel as though I were exiling you."
She decided to walk in to the village with him. "I need some darning cotton," she explained. "Besides, travel in foreign countries has a broadening influence upon even the most enlightened of rulers."

She went with him to the station, and they walked the platform in silence until the train came.

"Well, good-by, Owen."

He took the hand she held out to him. They gazed into each other's eyes for the fraction of a second. There was something he wanted very much to say to her.

"You"—he felt a queer little catching in his throat—"you'll find some butter in the cold storage, and—er—

Good-by."

"I'll—we'll—don't worry about your things," she told him, with a smile, in which her eyes did not take part.

"All aboard! All aboard!" And then the engine began to snort and puff: Rausch! Rausch! Rausch! Rausch! Rausch! Rauschrausch!

On the train Owen kept telling himself what a meddlesome old ass his uncle was. By the time he reached New York he was fully convinced that it would be a very satisfactory thing to tell his uncle what a meddlesome old ass his uncle was. He checked his suit case at an old-fashioned hotel that he knew not far from Washington Square and started out upon his mission.

At his uncle's house, a couple of blocks above, just off the avenue, the gray-haired butler said no, that his master was not in.

"Well, will you tell him when he comes that his nephew called? If

he—__'

"Oh, sir, then you must be Master Owen, sir. If you'll just step in, sir, and take a seat I'll try his clubs on the phone. He'd be very sorry not to see vou."

"Humph!" thought Owen. "Even talks it over with the servants, it seems,"

As he seated himself in the big, repcovered, winged chair and glanced about the room into which he had been shown, he had a vague feeling of disappointment at the glass-knobbed, mahogany writing desk, at the Wingate table in the far corner, at the pewter candlesticks above the graceful, cleancut fireplace, in fact at everything about him. He had rather hoped to find his uncle's house filled with fussy walnut furniture of the kind usually found beneath the roofs with which our fathers have blackened Mansard's name in this country. It would have made it easier for him to tell his uncle what he wanted to say to him.

As it happened, Owen's uncle was not to be found at any of his clubs.

"It really doesn't matter," he assured the butler. "I expect to be in town for several days. I don't know just where I'll be, but he can always reach me through the hotel." Owen scribbled the name upon a card.

Upon the recommendations of Louis XIV, Alexander the Great, Bonny Prince Charlie, and other personages whom at various times he had been, he lunched at the little Italian restaurant he had known so well before assuming the throne of West Idle Isle. After satisfying the waiter's claim for indemnity he wandered aimlessly over to the Sixth Avenue "L" and took a downtown train. Before he had really told himself where he was going he had gotten off, crossed City Hall Park, and was entering the building where lived a newspaper that, in Owen's opinion, enabled all other journals to find out what they had missed from day to day.

The assistant city editor almost wrung his hand off, at the same time grouping a mouthful of Bible words so as to express simultaneous surprise, welcome, solicitation, and friendship.

The city editor, returning from the files in the rear of the room, caught sight of him.

"Hello, Ownie," he greeted him heartily. "Where in thunder have you been keeping yourself? Sit down and tell us all about it."

They talked of things of interest to newspaper men: Of politics and the theatre; of Princeton's chances against Yale; of what Mitch was doing then, and of how sad it was about poor old Jack Kerrigan.

"And, oh, by the way," the city editor called to him, as he was leaving. "how long are you in town for, and where are you stopping? Some of these evenings when you have nothing better to do I'm apt to have an assignment for you to come to dinner with me."

Owen gave him the name of his hotel, and said he would be willing to cover that sort of a story any old time, even on his day off.

Late in the afternoon, when Owen entered the hotel, the clerk, a Frenchman, deferentially handed him a note.

"Your uncle called soon after you left," he explained. "He was very sorry to miss you. We did not know before that you are the nephew of m'sieur. M'sieur is very well known to us." This last with a flattering touch of pride.

Owen hastily tore open the envelope. His "affect. uncle" trusted that he could arrange to dine informally with him at his house that evening. He would expect him at seven unless he should hear from Owen in the mean-

The clock in the hotel parlor began to strike. Owen glanced at the clock Then he looked at his in the office. watch. The average time was about half-past five.

"If you can give me a single room on the avenue side," he told the clerk, giving him his coatroom check for his suit case, "I'd like to go up to it now."

"Front!"

As Owen followed the boy he began to regret that he had not brought his dinner coat. Not that he cared in the slightest for clothes merely as clothes, but because he had something to say to his uncle, and because it is so much easier to express indignation, contempt, and kindred sentiments when one is properly dressed for it. After six o'clock a man in a sack suit, king though he be, must hold himself very, very high in order to be able to look down upon even the lowliest of his subjects if the latter wear evening clothes.

However, there was no help for it, and Owen, and the barber, and the bootblack did the best possible with him

under the circumstances.

Promptly at seven he presented himself at his uncle's house. While they are expressing pleasure at seeing each other, and going through other formalities preparatory to sitting down to dinner, let us briefly describe the host. Later on, when it is more important that we should listen, we may not have

the opportunity.

Owen's uncle was, and still is, an elderly gentleman with grave, brown eves and a carefully kept gray mustache of the sort that does not cause anxiety during the soup course. His figure showed that he had lived well rather than greedily. He had a deferential gentleness of manner that came, one felt, rather from a subconscious assurance of superiority than from any feeling of inferiority. There was something about him that immediately proclaimed him one of those New Yorkers of a former generation who can tell when a bird is cold storage; who know that there are other wines than champagnes; and who still believe that the frock coat is the proper dress for Sunday evenings. As he sat at the head of his table with the half light of the candles- But listen:

"You are in town for long?" he was

asking with polite interest.

Now, this was just the opening for which Owen had been hoping. Since the receipt of his uncle's invitation to dine he had been building up his plan of campaign upon this very foundation. "You are in town for long?" he had had his uncle ask him while he was buttoning his collar. "Yes, thanks to you," he had had himself retort as he was tying his tie. "Thanks to me? What do you mean?" And then, while he was putting on his trousers, waist-

coat, and coat, Owen had told him just what he did mean in no unmistakable language. Just to make sure of himself he had gone all over it again while he was being shaved, and while the boy was blacking his boots he had even added a few scathing touches. Now, Owen thought that in these rehearsals he had taken into consideration, as a good general should, every possible move on the part of his antagonist. But he was wrong. There was one very important factor in the enemy's defense that he had not taken into account: Burgundy.

It's odd about Burgundy. Whisky, we are told, brings out the savage in man and arouses the fight in him. It is sometimes called "Dutch courage." Champagne arouses the sarcastic wit in him; produces the brilliant, rapierlike tongue thrusts and parries. But Burgundy! How can a man bear malice when his very finger tips are tingling with comfort and prosperity? When the gentle warmth of his blood is soothing his senses and urging peace to all

men?

"You are in town for long?" Owen's uncle had asked, with polite interest.

"Why, yes, sir, I think so," answered Owen, setting down his glass of Burgundy. "I've got a couple of ideas for stories that I want to try to work up and—er—I thought I might as well get right at it and see what I can do with them."

The moment the words were out of his mouth Owen would have given a king's ransom to have had them back again. But it was not until they were sipping their coffee in the library that he could bring himself to say what he

had to say.

"Your letter, sir—I want you to know that it wasn't that that made me come to town," he blurted out defiantly. "It was she herself who made me come. She said that if I didn't go she would have to. I know it wasn't your fault. It was that slandering cur Rausch who made all this trouble, and if I ever get a chance—I—I——"

"Rausch isn't just our sort, I know," admitted the uncle soothingly. "But as

your grandfather used to say, Owen, what satisfaction is there in fighting the chimney sweep? If you do manage to best him you only besmudge your-self."

"But from what I've heard of my grandfather he was not the sort of man to sit idly by and hear a beastly cad like Rausch slander as good and pure a girl as ever lived," said Owen hotly. If he had been calmer he might have detected an expression of approval in his uncle's somber eyes.

"I know she must have been all that to you, Owen. Otherwise she could not have appealed to you. You are a gentleman. And that is no credit to you, mind you. You could not very well be anything else."

"Tisn't I alone. Everybody who knows her must worship her—even Rausch in his slimy, scummy way. That's why he made all this trouble. Why, the man doesn't live who is good enough for her to wipe her boots on.

It makes my blood boil. You think that just because a woman's on the stage she—she—"

"I own that I may be a bit old-fashioned in some of my ideas," admitted the elder man. He got up from his chair and began to pace slowly up and down in front of the fireplace. "I fear I have done this young lady a grave injustice. A gentleman should protect a woman's name under any circumstances. I have not done so. It was to you that I repeated certain malicious gossip concerning an estimable young lady. Therefore it is to you, Owen"he faced his nephew and spoke with great deliberation—"that I apologize. I ask your pardon, sir. If my words fail to express well the regret I feel, it is because I have never before had occasion to make an apology.'

Owen felt that he should make some acknowledgment, but couldn't think exactly what to say. This was just as well, perhaps, as he felt a queer something in his throat that would have made saying anything uncertain. He struck a match and held it to his cigar. The match went out, but that did not matter, as his cigar was already lit.

"You must think me a very meddlesome old codger," resumed the uncle, with attempted lightness. "I suppose I am meddlesome. But, as I said in my letter, after your Uncle Evan died, I suddenly realized that you and I were the only two of the old family left. I rather hoped that you would marry some nice girl in your own set-or what should and easily could be your set. I have some money, more than enough for the needs of a lonely old bachelor, and-yes, yes!"-Owen was about to say something-"I know that that would not make the slightest difference to you. If I'd thought for one moment that it would have, I'd have seen to it that it didn't. But I think I've said about enough for one night." He came over and placed a hand on Owen's shoulder. "Drop in and dine with me whenever you can. And let me know how you are getting along. Wait, I'll give you my phone number." He wrote it on the back of a card. "It isn't in the book. And remember, you'll always find a room ready for you here whenever you want it. Good night,

Out on the sidewalk Owen tried to sum up the evening's results. 'He had said what he had meant to, but not in quite the way he had meant to. He felt that he had not made his uncle understand, and his uncle had turned out to be the sort of an uncle he would like to have had understand. Oh, well!

He glanced at his watch. Too early for bed, so he went to a roof garden, where the show was not objectionably distracting. When it was over, as he was drifting out with the crowd, some one slapped him heartily between the shoulders.

"For Heaven's sake, Ownie!" a round-faced, genial-looking man greeted him. "Where did you drop from?" A youth with him seemed to know Owen, too. "Come, have a bite of supper with us." And they took him along between them.

"If I could only remember their names," thought Owen, as they were whirling along in a taxi, "I know I

would know their faces.'

CHAPTER IX.

To Owen the Café Romany was a place of bad salad oil and Hungarian music, patronized by inhabitants of New York's cozy-corner belt and sightseers from out of town who wanted to do something devilish. "Let's be Bohemian," they would decide, much as they might say: "Let's be funny," "Let's be surprised," or "Let's be inspired." It was their custom to laugh uproariously at their own jests, flip bread balls at each other, ask the waiter to have the orchestra play "Santa Lucia" or "Funiculi-Funicula," and talk loudly about some pee-anist-accent on first syllable-for the benefit of the people at the next table who, like as not, were doing just the same sort of things themselves. If any party were fortunate enough to possess a gifted cut-up who could change the claret stains on the tablecloth into funny faces with a lead pencil, why, so much the more Bohemian, of course.

Owen and his friends found places upstairs at one of the small tables against the wall. In ordering, each politely decided upon what he thought

the others would like.

"And now the drinks," suggested Owen's round-faced host. "Some of these Hungarian wines aren't half bad."

Owen, remembering that he had had Burgundy at dinner, suggested a tangle-named red wine, which, however, had nothing in common with Burgundy except its color. Merely because they were both red wines he thought they should "go well together." And yet it was this same monarch who once laughed at a certain queen for arranging her bookshelf with Darwin's "Origin of Species" next to "Alice in Wonderland," because, being exactly the same shade of green, they "went together perfectly." But enough of red wines and green books.

While his host's friend was describing the perfectly ridiculous thing that happened in the Jersey City station on his trip in, Owen began to look about

him.

At the next table a dilapidated man

with long, black hair, a long, black tie, and long, black finger nails was enjoying the hospitality of two clean-cut-looking lads of college age who had had too much to drink. Owen was familiar with the long, black type. He had run across them on Park Row. They write for money—when they can think of any one to whom to write for it.

"Yes," this particular one of the long, black type was telling his hosts, "he is the genius of the rising generation. His poetry is like a fresh salt breeze sweeping through the stuffy at-

mosphere of convention."

"Fresh salt breeze!" sneered Owen inwardly. What did any one in this tawdry place know of fresh salt breezes? His eye wandered to a large table where a party of eight were all laughing and talking at once. One of them, a man, pasty from prosperity, was taking his leave. He looked to be a man who had everything that money can buy and nothing that money cannot buy. A slender, willowy girl, beautiful in an artificial way, gazed soulfully up into his eyes—or was it at the diamonds and sapphires on his white, soft hands?

"We'll see you again soon?" she

asked in clinging tones.

Owen gave an inward snort of disgust, and turned his attention to the supper which the waiter was setting before him. He drank deeply of the Hungarian wine that was the color of Burgundy. The stifling atmosphere of the place made him hunger for the crisp sea air of the island. The wild, weird minors of the gypsy orchestra made him long for the music of waves lapping upon the beach and the wind whistling through the trees. blinked at the glaring electric lights in their art nouveau fixtures and thought of the soft mellow moon shining down upon him through the chinks in his palace roof as he lay on his roval couch. He emptied his glass.

"Don't look now," his host told him, "but when you get a chance see if you know the people back of you to your left. Either they know you or else

your tie has slipped up over your collar or something. They've been glancing over here ever since they sat down."

After a few moments Owen turned as though searching for the waiter. He did know the people back of him to his Mrs. Lambert beamed and waved, Mr. Elliott smiled and nodded, Mr. Rausch merely nodded, Miss Mon-

tesque raised her glass.
"Long live the Mr. King!" she gayly

called across to him.

Owen flushed. Then, realizing that some acknowledgment was necessary. raised his own glass and gravely bowed.

He was not very much surprised at seeing them all there. He felt that they were thoroughly in keeping with the place: that they could not have chosen more appropriate surroundings.

While he was explaining who they were to his host he heard them burst into laughter. They were laughing at him, no doubt. "Long live the Mr. King!" Very funny, indeed, he told himself bitterly. He gulped down the remainder of his wine.

"This place certainly has a unique atmosphere," observed one of Owen's

companions.

Unique atmosphere! Would that gypsy orchestra never stop its infernal squeaking and whining? Would those people never cease their eternal buzzing and clatter? If either was sufficient to drown out the other there might have been some excuse for it. Owen felt that he could not stand it a moment longer. Seized by a sudden impulse, he whipped out his watch and glanced at it.

"I must be going," he said abruptly. "I had no idea it was so late. Waiter; my hat." To his host: "Thanks for the good evening." To both of them: "It's certainly been bully to have seen

you fellows again.'

Neither of them expressed surprise at his sudden departure. Perhaps they thought that he had had too much to "Well, and what if they do?" "Perhaps they are thought Owen. right." He did not look toward Rausch and his party as he hurried out.

On his way over to the Third Ave-

nue elevated he passed a peanut stand. The roaster was hissing steam. "Cease -stay-city-stop," it seemed to say to him. He paused as though in doubt.

"Peanuts? Fresh roasted peanuts?" suggested the vender hopefully.

But now the steam was singing a song of "sea-salt-sand-Sound," and

Owen hurried on.

A train was just leaving the elevated station as he mounted the stairs. "Oh, well," he reasoned, "if I don't make the depot in time it will mean that it is better that I should not go. If I do make it, well and good." For Owen, like those other great monarchs, Napoleon Bonaparte and Aygul, of Allegoria, was something of a fatalist.

He did make it, and with four minutes to spare by the big clock in the Grand Central waiting room. He could

still get a train to Stamford.

"Single or return?" asked the man

at the ticket window.

"That all depends—I can't tell until I get there," Owen murmured absently. Something in the ticket agent's expression brought him to himself. "Whyer-single. That is-er-yes, course, just one way. I beg your pardon.

And so, just as Cæsar had burned his bridges behind him in his day, Owen, of West Idle Isle, adapting himself to modern conditions, purchased a

single-trip ticket.

There were times during the journey up when he had his doubts as to the wisdom of the course he was pursuing. What explanation could he give Eileen of this sudden return to his kingdom? As for that matter, what explanation could he give to himself? By the time the train reached Stamford he had almost decided to go to a hotel for the rest of the night, and return to New York early in the morning. But the shops were all closed and he hated to sleep without pajamas in a hotel where he didn't know the sheets. So, bravely facing Soroton, he started out on his long, six-mile trudge.

Once out of Stamford and swinging along the white, moonlit road, the crisp salt breeze swept his troubles from him.

King Owen was himself again. And, as was his nature, being himself, he became many other men. First he was The millions of glittering gold pieces in the star-studded sky above him all were his, as far as the eye could reach. When, finally, Crœsus became tired, it was Alexander the Great who took up the march with fresh vigor, and carried it for many parasangs along the Boston post road, into the lane that led to the shore. The nodding corn in the field on his left was the Persian hordes, bending and pros-trating themselves before their conqueror. Roxana, fairest of all the virgins of Asia, would be awaiting him at the end of his march.

Afraid of footpads in that lonely lane? Lonely lane? Do you suppose for a moment that paltry footpads would venture to oppose the myriad hosts riding behind him, their breast-plates and lances shining in the moon-

light?

Onward he went, on his triumphal way, along the shore lane, through Persia, through Egypt, through India, until he came into view of the Connecticut Sound. And there, at the edge of the sandy beach-or was it at Babylon some twenty-two hundred years before?-Alexander the Great passed peacefully away. But no matter. Lief Ericsson and his hardy Norsemen, charged by King Olaf to proclaim Christianity in Greenland, strode boldly down the rickety dock to man their They stopped and anxiously ship. searched the water on all sides. Their valiant leader even went so far as to lie down on his belly and peer in under the dock.

"Hang it all!" It was Owen who exclaimed this, for Lief Ericsson and his men, as soon as they had made sure that there was no ship at hand, had silently withdrawn. "I might have remembered that the boat would be out

at the island. Fool!"

Owen took out his pipe and managed to scrape together enough tobacco from his coat pockets to fill it. Then he found that he had no matches.

"Oh, well," he sighed philosophical-

ly, "if there were no hills in this life there would be no valleys, I suppose." Whether it was want of a boat or want of a match that inspired this sage observation, he did not ask himself.

He sat down on the edge of the dock and tried to consider calmly the problem that confronted him. The nearest hotel—pajamas or no pajamas—was in Stamford, six miles back. And there lay his kingdom—he could see the dark splotch out over the water—less than a mile away.

He strolled down to the beach and began to pace the water's edge. The cool, wet sand was refreshing to his

feet

Less than a mile away? He stopped short and gazed out at the island. He had often swam more than twice that distance just for the sport of it. He slipped off his coat and tie, and flung them on the beach. Why hadn't he thought of it before? Moreover, the tide was low, and he could wade out fifty yards of the way at least. He stripped off the rest of his clothes and threw them together in a heap under the dock. He would row over and get them early in the morning. "Still," he thought, when he had

"Still," he thought, when he had waded out until the water was up to his knees, "it might be safer to take my watch and things along just in case

some one should happen by."

He splashed back to the dock, and went through his pockets, turning them inside out in his haste. He placed his watch and what money he had in the centre of his handkerchief, and made a compact little bundle of them. Then a new problem confronted him. How was he to carry this without getting it wet on the swim out? Invention, as usual, was born of necessity.

He knotted the ends of the handkerchief securely to one of his garters, and, carefully adjusting the elastic to the proper length, fastened it around his head so that his treasure pressed reassuringly against his brow. This done, he splashed triumphantly out into the

water.

Mugs, the Irish terrier comprising

the royal kennels of East Idle Isle, was a good watchdog. Since his disgrace, earlier in this history, he had slept with one eye open, alert to seize the first opportunity for winning his way back into royal favor. Imagine his elation, when, after innumerable long nights of patient watching, his vigil was finally rewarded by the sight of a man's head, far out upon the water, bobbing weirdly up and down in the moonlight.

He tore down to the water's edge, and barked, and barked, and barked, out of sheer delight at his splendid discovery. As soon as his first joy had subsided he recollected his duties as a watchdog, and barked, and barked,

and barked with defiance.

Owen, plugging away at an even breast stroke so as to keep the improvised treasure bag on his forehead dry, whistled in the hope that the dog would recognize him and cease his noise.

Mugs did recognize him, and hospitably barked him welcome. Suddenly he whisked about, rushed up the beach, and disappeared through the brush.

Owen heaved a sigh of relief. He made a final spurt, hoping to reach shore before Mugs should resume his Soon he was able to touch barking. He had not waded in far, bottom. however, before the dog came yelping and cavorting down the beach again. Owen made a frantic rush for land. The water was now only a little above his knees; a few yards farther and he would have reached his goal, when-

Splash!

With shocking suddenness he sat down so that only his head and shoulders remained above the surface.

Two white clingy figures, the taller, more angular one slightly in advance, appeared from out of the black, scrub-

oak jungle.

"Who is there? What do you want?" demanded a hard, cold voice, that under the circumstances would certainly have been awesome to one unfamiliar with it.

Owen should have answered at once, of course, but just at that moment he was absently musing upon the curious fact that, of two women, identically

robed and with features indiscernible. it is possible for one to look very bewitching while the other looks very much like a witch.

"Who is there?" repeated the hard,

cold voice.

"Tis I-"I," he called back. Owen."

"Owen!" It was a soft, warm voice this time. "What on earth— What have you done to your head? You are hurt!

He gladly would have been for the

sake of hearing her say so.

"I'm not hurt. That's my watch," he called over, feeling of his forehead. "It-I swam over and- Please go away! I'll explain everything in the morning."

"But you mustn't stay out there, You'll catch your death of

cold. Oh, dear! Please come in."
"But I can't. My clothes—I want to

come in. Please go away!"

He thought he heard a faint "Oh!" The two white figures hastily shrank back into the trees. When he felt sure it was safe he straightened up and dashed to his oabin. There, slinging a blanket about him, he flopped down on his cot and slept.

CHAPTER X.

When Owen awoke, the sun was streaming in through the chinks in the cabin room. He had a dull pain above his eyes, for which he blamed Hungarian red wine. He raised his hand to his aching brow, and Good heavens! No wonder his head ached. With a mumbled apology to Hungarian red wine, he removed the garter from his head, and untied the tightly knotted bundle that had been pressing against his forehead. He held his watch to his ear. It had stopped. He opened it. It had stopped at one-seventeen.

He must explain things to Eileen at once. But his clothes—he had meant to get them first thing in the morning. Oh, well, he could put on these old flannel trousers. In the meantime-a dip. He pulled on his bathing suit and

ran down into the water.

As he was coming out, dripping and refreshed, he saw a man coming down toward him from the path that led to the well. There was something strangely familiar about the man. He looked very much like—but it couldn't be. How could it be? he asked himself. His imagination was playing him tricks. He rubbed his eyes and looked again. With a slight start he pulled himself together, and, resigned to any prank that fate might still have in store for him, advanced to meet—his uncle.

In the light of recent historical research the unexpected appearance of Owen's uncle can be satisfactorily ex-

plained as follows:

When Owen piled his clothes together on the beach beneath the dock it was low water. The rising tide, upon reaching them, gently untangled them, and sloshed them about to various parts

of the beach.

Early in the morning an old veteran from the soldiers' home near Soroton, who had wandered down to the shore to pass some of the time that had not already passed him, caught sight of the coat and hobbled over to investigate. The pockets were empty—not even a handkerchief. Then he spied the trousers and a bedraggled shirt farther up in the shadow of the dock. The buttonhole of the shirtband was torn out, as though it had been ripped off very hurriedly.

"Humph!" Trembling with excitement, the old fellow picked up the trousers and gingerly held them at arm's

length.

The pockets had been turned inside

out!

Not in twenty years had the old man covered ground as he covered it over the lane that led to the village. He hippity-hopped along with a disregard for lameness—Pickett's Charge—and rheumatism—the Wilderness—that would have jeopardized his pension had there been any one to see him. He sought out the village constable.

Several local Sherlock Holmeses knew from the way the constable stroked his chin that the old soldier must be the bearer of great tidings, and crowded around him. They all accompanied him back to the scene of mystery.

"There!" He pointed triumphantly to the garments scattered along the

beach.

"Um-m! Still damp," muttered the constable sagely, as he picked up the trousers. "You say them pockets was inside out that way when you found 'em?"

"Yes, an' not only that, but look at this here shirt. See, the buttonhole's all tore out like somebody ripped it off."

"Um-m! You can see from the way this watch pocket is wore that he must've carried a watch, all right," reasoned the constable. "But it ain't here

now-that's plain enough.'

"Have you looked in the inside coat pocket to see if there's any name?" suggested the camera-and-bicycles-supplies man, who sometimes picked up an odd dollar or two by sending Soroton news items to a news bureau. "If it's a made-to-order suit it ought to have his name in it."

Investigation showed that it did have

his name in it.

"Why, that's that queer young feller from New York that's stoppin' out to the island. Probably went swimmin' an' left his clothes too near the water or somethin', an' they got washed in."

"But them pockets? An' that torn buttonhole?" objected the old veteran, jealous of the importance of his great discovery. "An' how about his watch an' all his valuables bein' gone?"

"Besides, he left here last Thursday," put in the camera-and-bicycle-supplies man. "I saw him get on the train. That yeller-haired young lady out there was in to see him off. And Jack Higgins told me that he'd had his address changed at the post office. It's my private opinion that he's met with foul play."

"He might have come back," persisted the constable. "I shouldn't wonder but he's out there at the island right now, huntin' high an' low for his

clothes."

"Nope. He left for good last Thurs-

day, all right," put in the lobsterman, who had joined the group. "I was out to the island only yesterday mornin' with some lobsters for the ladies that have the bungalow. He wasn't there then, an' they told me he wasn't comin' back at all."

"Then how could he have met with foul play here when he was away off somewheres else?" asked the constable very reasonably. "The only thing I can see to do is to take charge of these clothes here an' wait an' see what turns up. It's best to go slow in a thing like

this."
Thus developed a great mystery.

The camera-and-bicycle-supplies man at once became a journalist bristling with importance. As soon as he had verified at the railroad station the lobsterman's statement that Owen had not returned by train to Soroton, he telegraphed a laboriously composed twohundred-word story to the news bureau of which he was local correspondent. In between his introductory assertion that "this town is all agog" and his concluding assurance that 'the local police are now investigating," he told of the finding of the clothes upon the beach, the unmistakable evidences of robbery and foul play, the name in the coat, and when the young man was last seen alive.

The news bureau's version of the affair, boiled down to fifty words, reached the paper for which Owen had formerly worked shortly before eleven that morning.

"Say, Don, here's a flimsy from the Amalgamated," said the telegraph editor, passing it over to the city desk. "Isn't that that young fellow you had down here?"

"Hmph! That's odd. He was in here only yesterday morning." To an office boy at the other end of the room: "Oh, Jimmy! Call up Costigan at police headquarters."

The city editor read the Amalgamated flimsy to Costigan over the phone, gave him Owen's hotel address, and told him to find out what he could about it.

Costigan hurried to the hotel. Yes,

he was informed by the clerk, m'sieur was stopping there, but—after investigation by a bell boy—no, he was not in just then; in fact, he had not slept in his room at all. No, they did not know where Mr. Costigan could find him now, unless—— But wait—he had an uncle with whom he had dined the evening before. They would write down the name and address of this uncle for him. Very likely m'sieur had spent the night with his uncle.

Owen's tincle, fortunately for this history, was in, and received Mr. Costigan with civility. But when he learned that his caller was "a representative of the press" he expressed doubts as to his ability to be of any service to him, for this old New Yorker was one of those old-fashioned men who consider that there are only three occasions when a gentleman's name can appear with propriety in the public prints—birth, marriage, and death.

"It's about your nephew we want to see you," Costigan explained.

Owen's uncle gave a start. The worst had happened. The newspapers had learned of the awful scandal which had threatened the family name.

"Then my nephew will have to speak for himself," he said coldly. "If he has in any way conducted himself so as to merit publicity, which I should be very sorry to believe, he alone can speak with authority."

Costigan eyed him sharply.

"Then you haven't seen him since he took dinner with you last evening? That's all I wanted to know. We've just had a dispatch from a little place up on the Sound called Soroton that some clothes with his name in 'em were washed ashore, and—"

"What! What's this? Is he——"
Tell me the worst, man. Is he——"

"Probably nothing in it at all, sir. All we know is—" And Costigan, with tactful kindness, "now that the old codger had come down off his high horse," told him what little they did know about it. "We thought that if by any chance he did go up that way last night he might have mentioned it to you at dinner. Sorry to have troubled

you, sir. I honestly don't think there's the slightest cause for worry. As soon as we find out anything definite we'll let you know. Good day, sir."

"Perkins!" Owen's uncle called to his man as soon as Costigan was out of the house. "A hansom, At once."

"Yessir."

"Perkins— Never mind! elevated's quicker." He seized a hat and stick in the hall. "I'm going away. Expect me back any time." And, leaving Perkins' mouth and the front door both open, he hastened down the steps.

"Oh, Lord!" he groaned. "What a fool I've been! Fool? I'm a mur-

derer! Murderer!"

For Owen, his uncle very naturally concluded, rather than bring disgrace upon the family name, as his uncle had persuaded him he would, had given up Eileen. And, having given her up, he found life no longer worth living. He had gone back to Soroton directly after their talk of the night before, that he might end everything near her who, to him, had been everything. And for this he alone-miserable old man!-was to blame; as much to blame as though he had struck the boy down with his own hand.

The people on the elevated, the people in the depot, the people on the train —would they be going about their business so calmly did they know there was a murderer among them? Ugh!

At Soroton he inquired his way to the island, and after some trouble found a native who had a boat and

would row him out.

"Did y' hear about their findin' that young man's clothes on the beach this mornin'? Somethin' queer about that, all right."

"Yes," rather curtly. He was suffering from suspense, yet dared not end it. Better to fear the worst than know the worst.

"Friend of his, maybe?"

"No." He felt that he had been anything but a friend to Owen.

The native gave it up and rowed in silence until they were nearing the island.

"Here's yer island; where d'ye want to land?" he then asked.

Owen's uncle saw a girl down near the water's edge. He could not see her face, for she was bending over as though digging something in the sand, but her hair shone golden in the sunlight, and he had no doubts as to who she was.

"Over there," he said, nodding to-

ward the figure on the beach.

Hearing the sound of oars, the girl looked up. Then, satisfied that the boat contained nothing of interest to her, she resumed her digging. Even when he landed within less than fifty feet of her she paid no more attention to him. than if slightly embarrassed elderly gentlemen came in with every tide.

"Wait," he told the boatman, much as he would have spoken to a hansom

driver.

He cleared his throat to attract her attention. Something in the questioning way in which she glanced up at him made him keenly feel the desirability of a formal introduction.

"I beg your pardon, but I-Owen

Owen-

"Lives in the cabin on the other side of the island."

"But-er-have they-"

"You'll find him in his cabin, I think, He swam over from the mainland late last night, and he's probably still sleeping.

"Sleeping? Thank God! Then he is

safe!"

"Safe as far as I know," said Eileen, with a malicious trace of accent on the

"But his clothes? Those reports of

suicide?"

"Suicide!" Eileen's eyes opened wide in an expression of mingled terror and pleading. "What-what do

you mean?

He explained. She gave a little sigh of relief, and, in her turn, explained. She took him to the bungalow, where they found "mother," and the three went over the story together, fitting in the pieces where they belonged. It seemed amusing, now that they understood. And as one thing led to another, they began to understand other things, and those things, too, seemed amusing. The hiss of the Dragon gradually softened until it sounded for all the world like one of the noise units in the buzz of an afternoon tea. There is no telling how long it all might have lasted had not the guest's eye chanced upon the alarm clock on the shelf over the wash stand.

"Gracious! Can that be right? I had lost all track of the time. I had forgotten all about poor Owen. Not that there's any reason for my seeing him, now that I know I can, but after coming all this distance, I think I really ought. Pray accept my thanks." Then, looking squarely into Eileen's eyes: "I owe you a very, very great apology for He faltered slightly and continued impersonally to them both: "For having trespassed so upon your hospitality.

Eileen unaffectedly offered him her

hand. He bent low over it.

As Owen came slowly out of the water, this explanation of his uncle's presence on the island flashed through his mind: "He probably called up the hotel, and, finding that I had not been there, reasoned that I must have gone back to Eileen; that I could no longer keep away from her; that I was once more in her clutches. He has been out here to plead with her." Owen's heart sank at the thought. A splendid chance he had of ever working his way into poor Eileen's clutches now, he told himself.

The enthusiasm of their meeting was all on the part of the uncle who stood awaiting him on the beach.

"My boy!" he cried joyfully. "I had

given you up for lost.

"I knew it," groaned Owen inwardly. Aloud he said: "You need not have worried, sir. Small chance of my ever getting lost now-thanks to you.

"I know exactly what you mean," replied the uncle, who did not know at all. "I have been poking my nose into your affairs so much that-Owen, tell me something honestly: Are you engaged to be married?"

"I am not."

"Do you mean to tell me that she has rejected you?" There was as much of injured family pride as of surprise in his tone.

"Incredible as it may seem," replied Owen sarcastically, "it so happens that I have not as yet asked any lady to do me the honor of marrying me.'

The older man regarded his nephew

with amazement.

"Do you mean to tell me, sir, that you've spent the whole summer out here on this island and-Owen, you're an ass!"

With which he turned on his heel, leaving Owen speechless with astonish-

ment.

CHAPTER XI.

Owen, after his uncle's visit, did not go over to make explanations to Eileen for his very informal return on the night before. He felt that his uncle had made a fool of him. As soon as he thought he could safely do so without detection from the bungalow, he slunk around the edge of the island to his boat, and rowed over to the mainland to get his clothes.

'Idiot!" he muttered disgustedly when he viewed the place he had left them. "I might have remembered that it was low tide. Water's been up and washed 'em away, of course. Lucky I thought to take my watch and stuff."

Having nothing better to do, and wishing not to return to the island before dark, he decided to walk on into the village to see if, by the barest chance, some of the early clammers had come across his things before the

change of tide.

He soon learned more than he cared to about his clothes. Although congratulated right and left upon his fortunate escape from the various horrible fates that had been decided upon for him, he felt that deep down in their hearts the villagers rather resented his commonplace return; he had robbed them of a rare mystery.

An exception was the village constable, who was only too glad to turn over the clothes and the responsibility that went with them to their rightful owner. That hawk-eyed, fox-brained, pussy-footed stalker of crime fairly gloated over his vindication. He'd told them know-it-alls right from the start that they'd better not fly off the handle at conclusions; he'd had experience, he had; he knew.

Owen felt bound to confess that, while his uncle had undoubtedly made a fool of him, he himself had certainly

rendered valuable assistance.

He managed to reach the island again without attracting attention. "She's probably no more anxious to see me," he thought, with bitterness, "than I am

to have her see me."

Most of the next day he spent far out on the water, fishing. But early on the morning of the third day he met Eileen face to face at the well. He was as much embarrassed as he had been at their first meeting in the same place, but for different reasons.

"Hello, Owen," she said, as though nothing had happened. "Where have you been keeping yourself? I've been dying to see you. I have simply oceans

of things to tell you."

Owen mumbled something about

"busy" and "fishing."

"I met your uncle." She seemed to enjoy Owen's discomfiture. "He dropped in to see us that day—that day that all those terribly dreadful things didn't happen to you."

"Well, and what did he say?" he

asked defiantly.

Eileen was leaning upon the well cover with folded arms, smiling roguishly.

"Your uncle is an old dear. He said

that I had pretty hair."

"Yes, yes, but what else?" His impatience was complimentary. It implied that the quality of her hair was generally acknowledged. She took

pity on him.

"It's the strangest thing, Owen—just like a novel. It turned out that Miss Briggs—that's 'mother,' you know—remembered your uncle perfectly. He was a schoolboy at Andover when she taught at Abbott—that's the girls'

school there. And he used to know my real mother when she went there. They used to go walking together on 'the old railroad,' wherever that was. It wasn't allowed, and one day Miss Briggs caught them. You should have seen your uncle when Miss Briggs reminded him of it-he was just like a big overgrown boy who has been caught doing something he shouldn't. He said he'd often wondered what had become of my mother, and that my eyes were exactly the color of hers, and, oh, lots of nice things. He wished that he'd only known who I was before; it would have-Owen, I do wish you could have been there; he was so funny and embarrassed about it all. He explained that he had been so afraid that youthat you'd- He's really awfully fond of you, Owen," she ended lamely.

"What was he so afraid I would do?" asked Owen, with a quiet, newly found confidence. He took a couple of

steps toward her.

She did not answer, "Tell me," he demanded, with an odd smile. And then, remembering her philosophy upon a certain former occasion, he quoted her own words: "If you were perfectly willing to tell me I'd know that it did not concern me in the least. But as long as you will not tell me, I'll know it is something that I have a perfect right to know,"

"He—it was really nothing. It was just some insane notion he had that you —you might——" She turned a little

to hide her confusion.

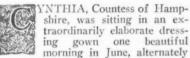
"Well, I am. I do, Eileen," taking her in his arms and holding her close.

After a moment she smiled bravely up at him, her eyes tear-dimmed with happiness.

"I'm afraid that I—do—too, Owen."
And then—well, there are occasions when two mouths can say more than one.

Such were the negotiations leading to the all-important treaty soon afterward drawn by a Stamford clergyman whereby the two kingdoms became, for ever and ever, United Idle Isle.

THE COUNTESS OF LOWNDES SQUARE E.F. Benson



opening letters and eating spoonfuls of sour milk prepared according to the prescription of Professor Metchnikoff. Every day it made her feel younger and stronger and more irresponsible-which is the happiest possible thing to feeland since, when a fortnight before she began this abominable treatment, she felt very young already, she was now positively girlish in the exuberance of her spirits, and was almost afraid that she would start again on measles, croup, whooping cough, and other childish ailments. But since this treatment not only induced youth, but was discouraging to all microbes but its own, she hoped she would continue to feel younger and younger without suffering the penalties of childhood.

The sour milk was finished long before her letters were all opened, for there was no one in London who habitttally had a larger post than she. Indeed, it was no wonder that everybody of sense-and most people of nonewanted to get her to eat their dinners and stay in their houses, for her volcanic enjoyment of life made the dullest of social functions a high festival, and since not even the measles and whooping cough of which she was afraid are nearly so infectious as enjoyment, it followed that she was much Even in her fiftieth year in request. she retained, with her youthful zest for life, much of the extreme plainness of

her girlhood, but time was gradually lightening the heaviness of feature that had once been of so remarkable an ugliness, and in a few years more, no doubt, she would become as nice looking as

everybody else of her age.

Her father, the notorious—probably infamous—Kakao, of mixed and uncertain origin, had at one time compiled by hook and crook-chiefly it is to be feared by crook-an immense fortune. but long after that was spent, and debts of equally substantial a nature been substituted for it, continued to live in London in a blaze of splendor so Oriental that he was still believed to be possessed of fabulous wealth, and had without the least difficulty married the plain but fascinating Cynthia to an elderly Earl of Hampshire and had continued to allow her ten thousand pounds a year, which he borrowed at a staggering rate of usury from overconfiding Hebrews. Consequently, when he and Cynthia's disgusting husband both expired within a few hours of the death of the other, the widowed and orphaned countess was left without a penny in the world. Father and husband were both sad rogues, and in death, in more than a chronological sense, it is highly probable that they were not divided.

It will therefore be easily imagined that her childhood and marriage had been a sound and liberal education to Lady Hampshire, for it had taught her that the world in general is very easily imposed upon, and that if you are intending to be a villain, the path of villainy is made much smoother of traverse if you smile. Shakespeare per-

haps had given her the germ of that invaluable truth, but, as in countless other instances, her brilliant brain brought to perfection what was only an immature bud of knowledge. In any case, the villain, so she shrewdly reasoned, must keep his frown to himself, and however dreadful the machinations on which he is employed, must cultivate a childlike bonhomic in public, and pretend to be innocently engrossed in the pleasures and palaces of this delightful world.

Lady Hampshire went further than this—especially since she had taken to sour milk—and actually was engrossed in them for a large majority of the hours of those long summer days. But like all game fish, she had a close time, which occurred every morning over her post. For to let the reader into her terrible and unsuspected secret, she was an earnest and adroit blackmailer.

It is easy to find excuses—if excuses are needed-to account for her adoption of so vivid and thrilling a life, for indeed it is difficult to see how she could have existed at all without some such source of income as this, and still less could she have kept up her delightful house in Lowndes Square, her cottage in the Cotswolds, her luxurious and rapid motor car, her box at the opera. her wonderful toilets at Sandown and Epsom and Newmarket and Aix and Marienbad. All these simple pleasures were really a necessity of life to her, while in addition to that she rightly regarded them as an indispensable part of her "make-up" as a blackmailer, her disguise through which she could securely grin. Had she, with her historic name, gone to live in Whitechapel or Bayswater, people would have inevitably concluded that she was hard up, and in the charitable manner characteristic of the world, have wondered how she managed to live at all except by some course of secret and productive crime.

Whereas the genial and affluent countess who gave her box at the opera not to her friends—for she was too clever for that—but to her possible enemies, whenever she did not want it, which was six nights in the week, since she detested music as much as she detested detectives, was a woman who need not laugh at suspicion simply because there was no suspicion possible to laugh at. Nobody bothered himself or herself as to how she got her money just because she always spent it so delightfully. If she had not spent it thus, or if there had been none to spend, there would have been excellent cause for the world to wonder where it came, or did not come from.

A word is necessary—for the sake of those who may possibly be ignorant of how such things are seemly and pleasantly managed-as to her methods when in pursuit of her profession. From an amateur standpoint and to the world at large, she was, as has been said, Cynthia. Countess of Hampshire, but in her business capacity and to the scarcely less numerous world of her charities she was Agatha Ainslie (Miss). Here she differed from Shakespeare, for she held that there was a great deal in a name, and, apart from the obvious objections in trading as Cynthia Hampshire, there was to her mind in the sound of 'Agatha Ainslie that which would inspire a sort of confidence.

Agatha Ainslie, to any one entering into business relations with her for the first time, would seem to be a not unkindly blackmailer; there was something forforn and pathetic about the title; it was in no way sharkish. She sounded kind, though her immediate mission might appear diabolical; she was like a dentist who might be supposed to treat you to nasty jabs and vivid extractions

for your permanent good.

In Lady Hampshire's life, passed as it was in country houses and restaurants and confidential baths, it was no wonder that she found many clients. There was scarcely a scandal in London that did not reach her voracious though sympathetic ear before it became public, and there were certainly many scandals that reached that eager orifice that never became public at all. She had a memory which bordered on the Gladstonian for retentiveness, and a terrifying and menacing pen, and a few words dropped

secretly into her ear came out of Agatha's stylograph charged with potential ruin.

But with the innate kindliness of her nature, she never allowed Agatha to blackmail any who could not afford to pay, and on the mere chance of the Budget of 1909-1910 becoming law, she had several times deferred the exaction of her little fines until it was certain that her client would not be seriously embarrassed.

Her wisdom to gentlemen, too, was shown in the fact that she never drove people to bay, or pursued them when there was a chance of their doing anything desperate. She only milked the fat, sleek cows, and sheared, so to speak, the bulky bulls. Indeed, as she quaintly said to herself, she looked upon the payments they made as a sort of insurance against indiscretions on their part in the future. She protected them against their own lower, and less cautious, instincts.

Her arrangements for Agatha were thoughtful in the extreme. Years ago her father had owned a small house in Whitstaple Street, of the kind described in auctioneering circles as "bijou," which backed on to her own less jewelsized mansion in Lowndes Square. This house in Whitstaple Street had providentially escaped the notice of his creditors when his affairs-if an entire absence of assets can be considered affairs-were wound up, and in order to give Miss Ainslie a discreet and convenient home, it had only been necessary to cut a door through the back of a big closet in her bedroom in Lowndes Square.

The rates and taxes of the bijou were punctually paid by Agatha, who had of course a separate banking account and a curious sloping hand; while a secret and terrible old woman called Magsby, whom Lady Hampshire could ruin on the spot for forging a valueless check of her father's, opened the door to trembling clients, and made gruesome, haddocky meals for herself in the kitchen.

Upstairs Lady Hampshire kept her Agatha clothes, in which she looked like

some unnatural cross between a hospital nurse and the sort of person who gets more stared at than talked to: and when she had found a home for the guileless young carpenter who fashioned her means of communication between Lowndes Square and Whitstaple Street in a remote though salubrious district of Western Australia, it really seemed as if she might laugh at the idea of detectives. She had but to lock herself into her bedroom, and in five minutes Agatha with her spectacles and rouge and terrible wig would be firmly conversing with clients in Whitstaple Street. Then when a pleasant conclusion had been come to, five minutes more would be sufficient, and Lady Hampshire would emerge from her bedroom refreshed by her rest, and ready to immerse herself in a perfect spate of fashionable diversions,

Such to Lady Hampshire's effusive and optimistic mind was her career as it should have been. But occasionally the hard, sordid facts of existence "put spokes" in the wheel that should have whirled so merrily. And as she sat this morning in her elaborate dressing gown, she found a spoke of the most obstructive kind.

Agatha's letters had, as usual, been placed outside the door of communication by the terrible Magsby, and Lady Hampshire, on the principle of business first, pleasure afterward, had answered all the letters sent to herself which dealt with the social pleasures of town before she opened the far more exciting packet of Agatha's correspondents. The very first of them made her feel as if she had the measles indeed with something gastric thrown in. It ran thus:

To Miss Agatha Ainslie, Dear Madam: I have learned your terrible secret, and learned the means whereby you shine so brightly in giddy throngs. Believe me that my heart bleeds for you that in your position you should ever have had to descend to the crime of blackmailing, which, as you know, is one of the most serious dealt with and visited by the otherwise humane code of English law.

Now, I make no threats; I studiously avoid them. But if you can help a deserving and struggling individual already past the

prime of life, I assure you on my sacred prime of life, I assure you on my sacred word of honor that you will not sleep the less soundly for it. A pittance of one thou-sand pc.ands a year paid quarterly, and in advance, would be considered satisfactory. My messenger shall call on you this afternoon at a quarter past three, and I earnestly suggest that the first payment should then suggest that the first payment and there be paid him. Faithfully yours, M. S.

P. S.-Motives of delicacy prevent my mentioning my name. A check, therefore, would be less welcome than bank notes or, possibly, gold.

Lady Hampshire shuddered as she read. Often and often she had wondered with kindly amazement at the harelike timidity of her clients, who so willingly paid their little mites to the upkeep of her establishment, when a moment's courage would have taken them hot-foot to the smiling and hospitable portals of Scotland Yard. But as she read this perfectly sickening communication, she found herself, in the true sense of the word, sympathizing with them-that is to say, suffering with them. It really was most uncomfortable being blackmailed for something of an illegal nature which you actually had done, and she no longer wondered at the lamblike acquiescence with which her clients fell in with the not unreasonable terms that she offered them. .

For as often now as the thought of calling at Scotland Yard occurred to her, her soul cried out like a child in the dark, and her courage oozed from her like drippings from a squeezed Furthermore, so spirited a proceeding was rendered even less feasible by the fact that it was not Lady Hampshire who was being blackmailed, but her Agatha. She doubted very much if she would be allowed by the odious meticulosity of English law to prosecute on behalf of poor Miss Ainslie, who must suddenly have gone abroad, while the idea of going to the house of vengeance in the disguise and habiliments of that injured spinster was outside the limits of her sober imagination. And who could M. S. be with his veiled threats and nauseating denial of them? She ran rapidly through the list of her clients, but found none whom she

could reasonably suspect of so treacherous a feat.

Very reluctantly she was forced to the conclusion that she would have to pay the first quarter anyhow of this cruel levy. Luckily Agatha had been doing very well lately, for London had been amusing itself with no end of questionable antics, and there was a prospect of a good season to come. But two hundred and fifty pounds per quarter would assuredly take a considerable portion of gilt off poor Miss Ainslie's gingerbread, and it was at once clear to Lady Hampshire that she must raise

Agatha's rates,

She was lunching that day with Colonel Ascot, an old and valued friend. Though still only a year or two past fifty he had made three large fortunes of which he had lost two. But the third which he had rapidly scooped out of the rubber boom had sent him bounding upward again, and she had more than once wondered if she could get him on to Agatha's list. More than once also, in answer to his repeated proposals, she had thought of marrying him, but she did not think it right to accept his devotion without telling him about Agatha, and it seemed scarcely likely that he would wish his wife to have such an altera ego.

For Agatha led such a thrilling and tremendous an existence that it would be a great wrench to die to all her numerous and lucrative interests. On the other hand, if Agatha's business was to be threatened by those bolts from the blue, in the shape of demands from M. S., the pain of parting with her would be appreciably less severe. The matter required fresh and careful

Lady Hampshire had several other clients to write to, and it was timewhen she had finished this correspondence, and put it through the secret door

consideration.

at the back of her bedroom closet to be collected and posted by grim Magsby-to exchange her dressing gown for the habiliments of lunch and civilization. A new dress had come for her from Paquin's that morning, and as she

was to go to two charity bazaars, a matinée, and as many tea parties as there was time for between now and the early dinner which was to precede the opera and a couple of balls, she decided to wear this sumptuous creation.

Anything new put this mercurial lady into excellent humor, and she set out for lunch, which was only just across the square, not more than half an hour late, looking, as the representative of a fashion paper who was standing at the corner on the chance of seeing her, told her readers the following Saturday, "very smart and well gowned."

She knew she was certain to meet friends, since that always happened, and by the time she took her seat next her host, finding lunch already half over, she had quite dismissed from her mind the trouble of poor Miss Ainslie.

"But how delicious to see food again," she said as she sat down. "I was afraid lunch time was never coming this morning."

"And we were afraid that you were never coming, dear Cynthia," said the Duchess of Middlesex, who was on the other side of her host.

"I know; I am late. But as I always am late, it is the same as if I was punctual. The really unpunctual people are those who sometimes are late and sometimes not. Colonel Ascot has the other punctuality; he is always in time."

Lady Hampshire glanced round the table. There were but half a dozen guests, but all these were old friends, and by a not uncommon coincidence half of them were clients of Agatha, while the Duchess of Middlesex, so Lady Hampshire knew, was quite likely to become one, for she had lately taken to doing her shopping at Mason's Stores, and spent a long time over it.

Colonel Ascot glanced, apparently with purpose, at the Louis Seize clock that stood on the mantelpiece.

"One wastes a lot of time if one is punctual," he said. "But, after all, one has all the time there is."

"But there isn't enough, though one has it all!" said Lady Hampshire. "To-

day, for instance, would have to be doubled, as one doubles at bridge, if I was to do all I have promised to."

"But you won't, dear, so it doesn't matter," said the duchess. "In any case, there is always time for what one wants to do, and one can omit the rest. I always thought my time was completely taken up, but I find I can do my own shopping at Mason's as well. I buy soap and candles and sealing wax and take them home in the motor."

"But not every morning?" asked Lady Hampshire, beginning to attend violently.

"Practically every morning. Because every day I find I have forgotten something I meant to buy the day before. Also, it is a sort of retreat. One never meets there anybody one knows, which is such a rest. I don't have to grin and talk."

Lunch was soon over, and instead of having coffee and cigarettes served at the table, Colonel Ascot got up.

"I do hope, Lady Hampshire," he said, "that you and the others will not hurry away, and that you will excuse me, as I have a most important engagement at a quarter-past three, which I cannot miss. It is most annoying, and the worst of it is that I made the appointment myself, quite forgetting that I was to have the pleasure of seeing you at lunch."

"Am I to take your place as hostess?" Cynthia asked, as she sat down with him in a corner of the great drawing

"If you will, both now and always," said he.

She laughed; he had proposed to her so often that a repetition of it was not in the least embarrassing. But somehow, to-day, he looked unusually attractive and handsome, and she was more serious with him than was her wont. Also the thought of doing business for Agatha was in her mind.

"Ah, my dear friend," she said, "I should have to know so much more about you first. For instance, that appointment of your own making seems to me to need inquiry. Now, be truth-

ful, Colonel Ascot, and tell me if it is not a woman you are going to see?"

"Well, it is."

"I knew it," she said.

"But you must let me tell you more," said he. "She is an old governess of my sister's, whom I—I want to be kind to. Such a good old soul. The sort of helpless old lady with whom one couldn't break an appointment that one had made."

Lady Hampshire laughed again.

"Your details are admirable," she said. "And detail is of such prime importance in any artistic production."
"Artistic production." said he

"Artistic production," said he.
"Surely you don't suspect me of—"

"I suspect everybody of everything," she interrupted lightly, "owing to my extensive knowledge of myself. But go on; I want more details. What is the name and address of this helpless old governess?"

"Miss Agatha Ainslie," said he. "She lives in Whitstaple Street, just off

the square."

Lady Hampshire had nerves of steel. If they had been of any other material they must have snapped like the strings of the lyre of Hope in Mr. Watt's picture. Only in this case there would not have been a single one left. Colonel Ascot going to see Agatha at a quarter-past three! How on earth did he know of Agatha's existence? What was Agatha to him, or he to Agatha? And surely it was at a quarter-past three that the messenger of the ruthless M. S. was going to call at Whitstaple Street, where he would find the packet of bank notes for two hundred and fifty pounds that Lady Hampshire had made ready before she came out to lunch. Would they meet on the doorstep? What did it all mean?

Her head whirled, but she managed

to command her voice.

"What a delightful name!" she said.
"I'm sure Miss Ainslie must be a delightful old lady, with ringlets and a vinaigrette and a mourning brooch."

"I haven't seen her for years," said Colonel Ascot. "I will tell you about her when we meet again. Do let it be soon!"

"Perhaps you would drop in for tea to-day?" she suggested, expunging from her mind two other engagements. "I shall be alone."

"With the utmost pleasure," said he "I am already doing so much that there can be no reason why I should not do

more."

He made his excuses to his guests, and after allowing him a liberal time in which he could leave the house, Lady

Hampshire rose also.

"You are not going yet, dear Cynthia?" asked the duchess. "I wanted to talk to you about the advantage of doing your shopping at Mason's. And the danger of it," she added, catching Lady Hampshire's kind, understanding

eve.

Lady Hampshire felt torn between conflicting interests. Here she unerringly scented business for Agatha, and vet other fish, so to speak, who perhaps wanted to fry for Agatha demanded a more immediate attention. The duchess' complication must wait; she was dining with her to-morrow. For a wild, lurid notion had struck her ' ingenious mind; it was not less than necessary, whatever enticing possibilities beckoned in other directions, to hasten home and prepare to be Agatha. Colonel Ascot was going to see Agatha; nothing must prevent Lady Hampshire from hearing what his business was.

She went across the square, and let herself into her own house. There were half a dozen telegrams lying on the hall table; but without dreaming of opening any, she went straight to her bedroom and locked the door. Somebody, probably the second footman, was being funny at the servants' dinner, for shrieks of laughter ascended from the basement. As a rule, she loved to know that her household was enjoying itself, but to-day the merriment left her cold; and the next moment she was in Agatha's house, and calling to Magsby.

"I left a note addressed to M. S.,"

she said. "I want it."

The words were yet in her mouth when the bell of Agatha's front door rang in an imperious manner, and Lady Hampshire peeped cautiously out through the yellow martin blinds. On the doorstep was standing an old, old man with a long white beard. He leaned heavily on a stick, and wore a frayed overcoat.

She tiptoed back from the window.
"Give me the note," she said, "and
wait till I get upstairs. Then answer
the door, and tell Methuselah that Miss
Ainslie will be down in a moment."

Lady Hampshire stole up to Agatha's room, and hastily assumed her false gray wig, her spectacles, her rouge, her large, elastic-sided boots, her lip salve, her creaking alpaca gown, and with the envelope containing bank notes for two hundred and fifty pounds, addressed in Agatha's dramatic sloping handwriting to the messenger of M. S., descended again to her sitting room. Methuselah rose as she entered, and she made him her ordinary prim Agatha bow, and spoke in Miss Ainslie's husky treble voice.

"The messenger of M. S.," she observed.

"That is my name for the present," said the old man in a fruity tenor.

"I received your master's note, sir," said Agatha, "and you cannot be expected to know what pain and surprise it caused me. But what does he suppose he is going to get by it?"

Lady Hampshire was not used to spectacles, and they dimmed her natural acuteness of vision, besides making her eyes ache. And peer through them as she would, she could find nothing to support her lurid idea that the messenger of M. S. had anything to do with the man whose lunch she had just Before her was a sordid old ruin of humanity, red-eyed, whitebearded, a prey, it would seem, to lumbago, nasal catarrh, and other senile ailments. Probably in a few minutes, for it was scarcely a quarter-past three yet, Colonel Ascot would arrive. And again her head whirled at the thought of the possible nightmares that Providence still had in store for her.

Methuselah blew his nose.

"I fancy my master rather expected

two hundred and fifty pounds in notes or gold," he said. "He knows a good deal about Miss Ainslie. He is quite willing to share his knowledge with others."

Lady Hampshire raised her head proudly, so that she could get a glimpse of this old ruffian under her spectacles. The ways of genius are past finding out, and she could never give a firm reason for what she said next. A brilliant, unconscious intuition led her to say it.

"There is nothing the world may not know," she said. "In England it is no crime to be poor, and though I have been in a humble position all my life, my life has been an honest one. There is no disgrace inherent in the profession of a governess. For many years I was governess to Colonel Ascot's sister."

"Good God!" said Methuselah.

That was sufficient for Lady Hampshire. Her kindly soul was all aflame with indignation at this dastardly attempt to blackmail poor Agatha.

"In fact, now I look at you," she said,
"I recognize you. No wonder you blaspheme. I remember the bright boy who
used to come in and sit in the schoolroom while my pupil and I were at our
lessons. You have aged very much,
Colonel Ascot."

In that moment of recognition, she made up her mind. She could never marry him, she could never even lunch with him again. He was atrocious.

Methuselah rose.

"You are laboring under some strange mistake," he said. "I will call

"There is no mistake at all," said Lady Hampshire quickly, forgetting, in her perfectly natural indignation, to employ the husky treble tones which were characteristic of Miss Ainslie, "except the mistake you have made in thinking that you could with impunity blackmail a defenseless old governess like me. Where is Scotland Yard? I shall drive there immediately, and you shall come with me. I shall ring the bell."

She got up quickly, and then sat down again exactly where she had been, and Methuselah looked at her very carefully. Then he suddenly burst into peals of bass laughter.

"But you have aged very much, too,

Lady Hampshire," he said.

"Good God!" said Agatha Ainslie.
Magsby, waiting in the passage outside, felt uncertain as to what her duty was. She heard her mistress' voice and the voice of another, shrieking with laughter, which seemed to gather volume and enjoyment the longer it went on. Eventually she thought best to retreat to the basement, and prepare haddocks for her dinner.

"But, my dear, let us be serious," said Lady Hampshire at length. "Tell me, before I begin to laugh again, how on earth you ever heard of my poor

Agatha.'

"A mutual client," said Colonel Ascot, fanning himself with his long white beard. "Poor Jimmie Dennison. He told me, in a fit of natural exasperation, when I was reminding him about what happened at Brighton last September, that he could not afford to pay for the same thing twice over, once to me, and once to Agatha Ainslie. The poor boy showed me the counterfoils of his check book. It was Agatha Ainslie and Martin Sampson all the way. It was but natural, since he could not pay, that I should turn to Agatha, and see if she could."

"But are you really one of us?" said

Lady Hampshire.

"Apparently. Are you?"

There was a fresh relapse of laughter, and then Lady Hampshire pulled herself together. "I will go halves in Jimmie Dennison," she said, "whatever we may get. You might say you have squared Agatha. He ought to give you something for your trouble. Or I will say I have squared Sampson."

"It makes no difference," said Colonel Ascot. "But I am afraid our interests conflict in many quarters. For instance, the poor Duchess of Middlesex—"

"Shopping at Mason's," interrupted Lady Hampshire. "My dear friend, she is mine. She was going to tell me all about it this afternoon, only I had to come over here to see about Agatha."

Again Colonel Ascot exploded with

laughter.

"But she told me about it yesterday," he said, "and I had already drafted a short letter to her from Martin Sampson."

Lady Hampshire was annoyed at this, since the duchess was so very rich, and

so very silly.

"I don't know what we can do," she said. "We can't appoint an arbitrator, can we? Arbitrators would think it so odd. We shall have no end of wrangling about our properties."

"We had really better make it one

firm, Cynthia," said he.

Lady Hampshire took her spectacles off.

"Oh, I hoped you would suggest that!" she said.

So they lived happily and wealthily and amazingly for another twenty-four years—there is much yet that might be said about them.

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SERVICE

TO serve another's will— That's not for me. My heart is not athrill For slavery.

To serve another's need
Right heartily,
In thought, and word, and deed—
That's Liberty!
JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.



II.-WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT TELEPATHY



T eleven o'clock on the night of July 4, 1895, while lying in a hammook on the bank of the Niagara River, watching the last of the Independence Day

fireworks on the opposite shore, I suddenly heard my name called twice—hurriedly, faintly yet distinctly, and in a tone of anguish. The call seemed to come from across the river; but, oddly, it also seemed to come from within myself. It was not a voice that I recognized, but I instantly associated it with a friend then in Boston, hundreds of miles away.

My next thought, however, was that one of the friends whom I was visiting had called me. But I knew they had retired an hour before; and, in fact, their cottage was in darkness. Nor, as I found on rising immediately and going indoors, was any one moving about. Moreover, I had heard myself called by my first name, something my hosts never did.

I went to bed, but could not sleep. The idea kept recurring that my friend in distant Boston was in danger and was trying to communicate with me. So insistent did this idea become that I finally rose, lighted a lamp, and wrote her a letter detailing the incident and asking if anything out of the ordinary had happened to her.

Two days later, my friend having written before my letter reached her, I received word that on the night of July

fourth she had taken an overdose of a headache powder, with consequences that might have been serious had not medical assistance been at once obtained.

This is one of several personal experiences that have helped to convince me of the reality of telepathy, or the transmission of thought from one mind to another without the aid of any of the ordinary means of communication. But, indeed, in view of the overwhelming array of evidence that has been accumulated by competent investigators during recent years, or since the founding of the Society for Psychical Research, one's personal experiences are by no means necessary to produce conviction.

As studied by the Society for Psychical Research, and by individual investigators in many countries, the evidence for telepathy falls into two divisionsexperimental and spontaneous. former comprises all deliberate attempts to convey some specific thought from one person to a second without making use of any physical agency for communication. A simple, yet often effective telepathic experiment may be carried on with a pack of playing cards, one person, the "agent," drawing a card, noting what it is, and thinking of it more or less intently, while the other, the "percipient," endeavors to receive a mental impression of just which card was drawn. Or the agent may write a

word, or draw a picture, on a piece of paper, and the percipient try to duplicate it. Or, again, the percipient may be mentally requested to perform a certain act.

In every case care must be taken to afford no hint, by look or gesture, of the idea to be apprehended. In fact, to make the experiment really decisive the agent and the percipient should be seated in different rooms. Under this strict condition, remarkable results have been repeatedly obtained. To illustrate, Professor W. F. Barrett, the eminent Irish physicist and one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research, some years ago undertook an extensive series of experiments with some acquaintances named Creery, the percipients usually being one or the other of two young girls, Mr. Creery's daughters. On one occasion, Professor Barrett reports:

"One of the children was sent into an adjoining room, the door of which I saw was closed. On returning to the sitting room and closing its door also, I thought of some object in the house, fixed upon at random; writing the name down, I showed it to the family present, the strictest silence being preserved throughout. We then all silently thought of the name of the thing selected. In a few seconds the door of the adjoining room was heard to open, and after a very short interval the child would enter the sitting room, generally

with the object selected.

"No one was allowed to leave the sitting room after the object had been fixed upon; no communication with the child was conceivable, as her place was often changed. Further, the only instructions given to the child were to fetch some object in the house that I would fix upon, and, together with the family, silently keep in mind, to the exclusion of all other ideas. In this way, wrote down a hair brush-it was brought; an orange-it was brought; a wineglass-it was brought; an apple -it was brought; a toasting forkfailed on the first attempt, a pair of tongs being brought, but on a second trial it was brought.

"With another child—among other trials not mentioned—a cup was written down by me—it was brought; a saucer—this was a failure, a plate being brought; no second trial allowed. The child being told it was a saucer, replied: 'That came into my head, but I hesitated, as I thought it unlikely you would name saucer after cup, as being

too easy.' "

It has been found possible to transmit telepathically not only thoughts, but sensations, so that if the agent is struck or pinched, the percipient feels the blow or the pinch in exactly the same spot on his own body. This was demonstrated as long ago as eighteen eighty-two by Edmund Gurney, another of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research. Even sensations of taste may be "telepathed," as was shown by Mr. Gurney and other members of the society in experiments with two young women who acted as percipients.

The substances to be tasted were kept in a dark lobby outside the room in which the percipients were seated, and were tasted by the investigators at random. Yet in a surprisingly large number of cases the percipients correctly named the substance tasted. And that not merely the name of the substance, but the actual sensation of its taste was transmitted, was proved by the fact that it was found necessary to allow some minutes to elapse between each experiment, as the imaginary taste seemed to be fully as persistent as the

real one.

For instance, the agent tasted mustard, the percipient immediately said, "mustard"; the agent tasted sugar, the percipient did not get this taste at all, "I still taste the hot but declared: taste of the mustard." Acting on this hint, the time between the experiments was lengthened, and better results were obtained. Nutmeg, alum, Worcestershire sauce, cayenne pepper, carraway seeds, and cloves, among other substances, were absolutely identified. Occasionally there were indications that the substance of the article tasted was perceived before the taste itself.

the carraway-seed test, the percipient said: "It feels like meal—like a seed loaf—carraway seeds." And in a test with acid jujube: "Something hard—which is giving way—acid jujube."

In cases where there was no precise identification, there frequently was evidence that the taste had nevertheless been telepathically transferred. When one of the experimenters drank a little vinegar, the percipient announced that she felt "a sharp and bitter taste"; the tasting of bitter aloes was recognized as "horrible and bitter," and of candied ginger as "something sweet and hot." Total failures, where no sensation whatever or a completely erroneous sensation was experienced, were comparatively few. Other investigators. working under stringent conditions, have obtained similarly impressive re-

What obviously happens in all such experiments is that the agent succeeds in producing in the mind of the percipient a hallucination of the sense of Now, it has been discovered that the production of hallucinations is a distinctive characteristic of telepathy, and may involve any of the different senses, especially hearing and vision. When questioned, percipients sometimes declare that they seem to hear a voice announcing to them the idea in the mind of the agent, or, more frequently, that they get it by means of a visual hallucination, and often of a visual hallucination that is more or less symbolical.

The discovery that hallucinations can be produced telepathically has led to what must be regarded as the crowning achievement in this new field of experimentation - the psychological production of full-blown apparitions by mental power alone. Reference has already been made to this in my article on "Ghosts and Their Meaning," and I there cited several well-authenticated instances of telepathically created phantasms. But I did not then have occasion to call attention to a fact which is of the utmost significance from the point of view of understanding the telepathic process-namely, that

experiments of this kind form a connecting link between wholly experimental telepathy on the one hand and wholly spontaneous telepathy on the other. This for the reason that, in order to obtain perfectly satisfactory proof that the telepathic apparition has actually been seen, it is necessary for the agent to conduct his experiment without the percipient being aware of the fact. So far as the percipient is concerned, therefore, the production of the apparition is entirely spontaneous.

A typical case or two will make my meaning clearer. A Harvard professor, an acquaintance of Professor James, on whose authority I quote the story, having heard of the possibility of telepathic hallucinations, determined one evening that he would try to make an apparition of himself appear to a friend, a young lady who lived half a mile from his home. He did not mention his intention to her or to anybody else. The next day he received a letter, in which she said:

Last night about ten o'clock I was in the dining room at supper with B. Suddenly I thought I saw you looking in through the crack of the door at the end of the room, toward which I was looking. I said to B.: "There is Blank, looking through the crack of the door!" B., whose back was toward the door, said: "He can't be there. He would come right in." However, I got up and looked in the other room, but there was nobody there. Now, what were you doing last night, at that time?

At that precise moment, as he told Professor James, "Blank" had been at home, sitting alone in his room, and trying "whether I could project my astral body to the presence of A."

Possibly had the young lady been alone, and not actively engaged, she might have had a more definite view of the phantasm of her absent friend, for experience has shown that solitude and quiet are favoring conditions for the perception of telepathic apparitions. In nearly every instance reported to the Society for Psychical Research the percipient of the phantasm is alone and in a more or less passive, quiescent frame of mind. Such a condition usually obtains immediately before or immediate-

ly after sleep, and it is then that experimental apparitions are seen most plainly. Though occasionally they are vividly experienced when the percipient is in a state of the most active consciousness, as in the following case, reported by the agent and confirmed by the percipient, an English clergyman now dead, the Reverend W. Stainton Moses.

"One evening," runs the agent's account, "I resolved to try to appear to Z., at some miles distance. I did not inform him beforehand of the intended experiment; but retired to rest shortly before midnight with thoughts intently fixed on Z., with whose rooms and surroundings, however, I was quite unacquainted. I soon fell asleep, and awoke next morning unconscious of anything having taken place. On seeing Z. a few days afterward, I inquired:

"'Did anything happen at your

rooms on Saturday night?

"'Yes,' replied he, 'a great deal happened. I had been sitting over the fire with M., smoking and chatting. About twelve-thirty he rose to leave, and I let him out myself. I returned to the fire to finish my pipe, when I saw you sitting in the chair just vacated by him.

"'I looked intently at you, and then took up a newspaper to assure myself I was not dreaming, but on laying it down I saw you still there. While I gazed without speaking, you faded away."

Time and again it has happened in telepathic experiments that the percipient gets not the thoughts that the agent is actually trying to transmit, but thoughts in the minds of other persons who are present as mere spectators and are not consciously taking part in the experiment. Or, the percipient may get thoughts in the agent's mind, but not the thoughts he wishes to "telepath."

In the autumn of 1006 two Englishwomen, Miss Miles and Miss Ramsden, members of the Society for Psychical Research, planned an elaborate series of experiments in longdistance telepathy. They were living four hundred miles apart, Miss Ramsden in Scotland and Miss Miles in England. It was arranged that, on certain days of each week, Miss Miles should think in the evening of some idea or ideas which she wished to convey telepathically to Miss Ramsden, while the latter, at seven o'clock on the evening of each experiment day, was to think of Miss Miles, and note on a post card any very vivid mental impressions she then received. These cards were to be mailed immediately to Miss Miles, who, for her part, was to mail to Miss Ramsden post cards announcing the ideas she had tried to transmit. Thus, a flawless documentary record of the results of the experiments would be secured.

Altogether there were fifteen experiment days. On six of these the idea that Miss Miles was attempting to convey, as recorded on her post cards, appeared among the impressions received by Miss Ramsden on the same date. But the record of the other nine days was by no means a total failure, for it turned out that on a majority of these Miss Ramsden's impressions related to something that Miss Miles had been doing, or seeing, or talking about on the same day.

In other words, as is pointed out by Sir Oliver Lodge, who has made a careful study of the experiments, "while the agent only succeeded occasionally in transferring the ideas deliberately chosen by her for the purpose, the percipient seemed often to have some sort of supernormal knowledge of her friend's surroundings, irrespective of what that friend had specially wished her to see.'

Of course, this introduces an aggravating element of uncertainty into telepathic experiments. But it helps to account for the impossibility, of which so many investigators complain, of unfailingly obtaining positive, decisively evidential results; and it is particularly helpful in the way of bridging the seeming gulf between experimental telepathy and telepathy of the spontaneous type, in which the agent makes little or no conscious effort to influence the mind of the percipient.

I have already given, from personal

experience, one instance of spontaneous telepathy, in the hallucinatory voice I heard on the bank of the Niagara River. This is one of the commonest forms in which spontaneous telepathic impressions are received, and when the death of the agent is involved the auditory hallucination is sometimes of such a nature as to make its dire meaning self-evident. In this respect I know of nothing more striking than a strange case reported, with ample corroborative evidence, to the Society for Psychical Research.

The narrator, a well-to-do Englishman, was living at the time in a country house. It was early spring, and on the night of his telepathic experience there had been a slight snowfall, just sufficient to make the ground snow white. After dinner he spent the evening writing until ten o'clock, when, to continue the story in his own words:

"I got up and left the room, taking a lamp from the hall table, and placing it on a small table standing in a recess of the window in the breakfast room. The curtains were not drawn across the window. I had just taken down from the nearest bookcase a volume of 'Macgillivray's British Birds' for reference, and was in the act of reading the passage, the book held close to the lamp, and my shoulder touching the window shutter, and in a position when almost the slightest sound would be heard, when I distinctly heard the front gate opened and shut again with a clap, and footsteps advancing at a run up the drive; when opposite the window the steps changed from sharp and distinct on gravel to dull and less clear on the grass slip below the window, and at the same time I was conscious that some one or something stood close to me outside, only the thin shutter and a sheet of glass dividing us.

"I could hear the quick, panting, labored breathing of the messenger, or whatever it was, as if trying to recover breath before speaking. Had he been attracted by the light through the shutter? Suddenly, like a gunshot, inside, outside, and all around, there broke out the most appalling shriek-a prolonged

wail of horror, which seemed to freeze the blood. It was not a single shriek, but more prolonged, commencing in a high key, and then less and less, wailing away toward the north, and becoming weaker and weaker as it receded in sobbing pulsations of intense agony.

"Of my fright and horror I can say nothing-increased tenfold when I walked into the dining room and found my wife sitting quietly at her work close to the window, in the same line and distant only ten or twelve feet from the corresponding window in the breakfast room. She had heard nothing. I could see that at once; and from the position in which she was sitting, I knew she could not have failed to hear any noise outside and any footsteps on the ground. Perceiving I was alarmed about something, she asked:

"'What is the matter?'

"'Only some one outside,' I said. "'Then, why do you not go out and see? You always do when you hear any unusual noise.'

"There is something queer and dreadful about this noise?' I replied.

'I dare not face it.'

Nothing more was heard, and early next morning he made a careful search in the grounds around the house, but not a footprint was to be seen in the snow, which had ceased falling long before the occurrence of the wailing cry. A little later in the day, however, word arrived that at ten o'clock the previous night one of his tenants, who lived half a mile distant and with whom he had spent the afternoon, had committed suicide by drinking prussic acid.

He had gone up to his bedroom, his groom testified at the inquest, had mixed the poison in a tumbler of water, drank it off, and, with a terrible

scream, fell dead on the floor.

Fortunately, telepathic hallucinations do not usually come with such intensity or in such an alarming form. Often they are mere vague impressions that something unpleasant or disastrous is occurring to a relative or friend. It was thus in the case of little Frank Hinton, a thirteen-year-old boy of Clinton, Iowa. Entering his home one day

in the spring of 1908, in an overheated condition from playing baseball, young Hinton drenched his head in cold water, and, while drying himself with a roller towel, suddenly lost consciousness and fell forward, the towel twisting around his neck in a

strangling noose.

At the same instant his father, in another part of the house, although quite unable to give any reason for so doing, started to search for the lad, and found him hanging from the towel. Of course, it may possibly be argued that the father must have been mistaken in declaring that he had heard no noise that would cause him to think something was wrong. But this objection certainly would not apply in a similar instance reported by William Blakeway, a Staffordshire Englishman:

"I was in my usual place at chapel one Sunday afternoon, when all at once I thought I must go home. Seemingly against my will, I took my hat. When reaching the chapel gates I felt an impulse that I must hasten home as quick as possible, and I ran with all my might without stopping to take breath. Meeting a friend who asked why I hurried so, I passed him almost without notice.

"When I reached home I found the house full of smoke, and my little boy, three years old, all on fire, alone in the house. I at once tore the burning clothes from off him, and was just in time to save his life. It has always been a mystery to me, as no person whispered a word to me, and no one knew anything about the fire till after I made the alarm at home, which was more than a quarter of a mile from the

chapel."

Here the wholly subconscious nature of the phenomenon, on the percipient's part at all events, is plainly evident. It is even more evident in all cases where, as frequently occurs, the telepathic message is received in a dream. As is to be expected, too, in telepathic dreams we often find that element of symbolism of which mention was made in connection with experimental telepathy. The news of crisis, of accident, of death, whatever it may be, is not con-

veyed directly, but indirectly, amid a mass of more or less relevant details of

dream imagery.

I know of one lady who, on several occasions, has been made aware in dream of the death of absent friends. Invariably she dreams that she is standing by the side of a road along which a procession of people is approaching. As they pass, she sees that the only ones among them whom she recognizes are persons who have died. But presently she catches sight of the face of a friend who, she has every reason to believe, is still living. Sometimes she obtains only a fleeting glimpse of this friend's face, sometimes a full and distinct view. In either case, the mail or telegraph in due time brings her word that the person seen in this imaginary procession of the dead actually died on the night of her dream.

Or, when apprehended in dream, the telepathic message may be so distorted that its true meaning cannot possibly be recognized immediately. A characteristic case of this kind occurred at the time of President Lincoln's assassination, though it is only recently that it was for the first time reported in detail by Mrs. E. H. Hughes, daughter of the well-known San Francisco architect, S. C. Bugbee. It should be explained that before removing to California from Massachusetts in 1863, the Bugbees were well acquainted with the Booth family, and that John Wilkes Booth was an especial favorite of Mrs. Bugbee's. Says Mrs. Hughes, in her report to the American Insti-

tute for Scientific Research:

"One night my mother woke my father suddenly, saying: "Oh, Charles! I have had such a terrible dream! I dreamed that John Wilkes Booth shot me! It seemed that he sent me seats for a private box in a theatre, and I took some young ladies with me. Between the acts he came to me, and asked me how I liked the play. I exclaimed: "Why, John Booth! I am surprised that you could put such a questionable play upon the stage. I am mortified to think that I have brought young ladies to see it." At that he raised a pistol, and shot

me in the back of the neck. It seems as if I felt a pain there now.' After a while my mother fell asleep, and dreamed the same thing a second time.

"The next morning came the terrible news which plunged the nation into grief and mourning. Almost at the hour of my mother's dream, President Lincoln was assassinated; shot, in the back of the neck, in a private box at a theatre, by John Wilkes Booth."

On the other hand, there may be no symbolism or distortion, the dream corresponding so realistically with the event as to make its significance manifest. To give a single illustration, Mrs. Morris Griffith, an Englishwoman, reports:

"On the night of Saturday, the eleventh of March, I awoke in much alarm, having seen my eldest son, then at St. Paul de Loanda on the southwest coast of Africa, looking dreadfully ill and emaciated, and I heard his voice distinctly calling to me. I was so disturbed I could not sleep again, but every time I closed my eyes the appearance recurred, and his voice sounded distinctly, calling me 'Mamma!' I felt greatly depressed all through the next day, which was Sunday, but I did not mention it to my husband, as he was

an invalid, and I feared to disturb him. Strange to say, he also suffered from intense low spirits all day, and we were both unable to take dinner, he rising from the table, saying, 'I don't care what it costs, I must have the boy back,' alluding to his eldest son.

"I mentioned my dream and the bad night I had had to two or three friends, but begged that they would say nothing of it to Mr. Griffith. The next day a letter arrived, containing some photos of my son, saying he had had fever, but was better, and hoped immediately to leave for a much more healthy station. We heard no more till the ninth of May, when a letter arrived with the news of our son's death from a fresh attack of fever, on the night of the eleventh of March, and adding that just before his death he kept calling repeatedly for me."

It is only a short transition from such a dream as this to a waking hallucination in which—as in the cases of experimental occurrence mentioned above, and those other cases detailed in the preceding article—phantom forms are discerned at the moment when the person seen is threatened by some danger or is passing through the supreme crisis of death.

NIMBLE WATER

AS I strolled down by Nimble Water A hidden vireo fluted clear, And all the leaves by Nimble Water Paused in their gossiping to hear.

As I strolled down by Nimble Water A sudden sunbeam flashed above, And all the waves of Nimble Water Glowed with the largess of its love.

As I strolled down by Nimble Water A vagrant wind stole by, And every fern by Nimble Water Swayed as to fairy melody.

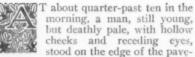
As I strolled down by Nimble Water
The whole world wore its virgin guise,
For there, beside the Nimble Water,
Were you—with morning in your eyes!
CLINTON SCOLLARD.



SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Stirling Deane, the manager of a great mining corporation, finds that a former companion, Richard Sinclair, is claiming to be the owner of his chief property, the Little Anna Gold Mine. claim he knows to be fraudulent, but Sinclair holds papers which may make trouble. Deane commissions Basil Rowan to see what he can do to obtain these papers. Rowan meets Sinclair. They quarrel and Rowan accidentally kills Sinclair. Rowan is tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death. All this, to the horror of Deane, who feels a keen responsibility in the matter. Deane is about to be married to Lady Olive Nunneley, and he dreads a scandal. Rowan's sister, Winifred, calls upon Deane and begs him to save her brother. He promises to do his best, and consults his lawyers, Messrs. Hardaway and Sons, whom he has already paid to defend Rowan. At last, after the expenditure of much time and money, Hardaway announces that a reprieve is certain. Deane goes away, for a rest, to a little seashore place, and establishes himself in an old coastguards' tower. He meets by chance a handsome girl named Ruby Sinclair and her uncle Mr. Sarsby. Deane questions the latter and finds out that Ruby is Richard Sinclair's niece. She had received a letter from Sinclair a few weeks before saying that he would shortly be a rich man. One evening, during a storm, Deane is startled by the sudden appearance at the tower of Winifred Rowan. She tells him that she has come to beg him to help her brother and gets his assurance that the latter will be reprieved. The next day Deane returns to London with Ruby and her uncle who have determined to examine Sinclair's effects for traces of the fortune of which he had written. Deane goes to the hotel where Sinclair was killed and tries to find the troublesome papers but discovers that Winifred has forstalled him and hears from her that she has found the papers, which she will turn over to him later for the reward.

CHAPTER XXII.



ment outside a great and gloomy-looking building. A nail-studded door had just been opened and closed to let him pass. The attendant, who wore prison livery, leaned forward curiously to look at him as he walked out with uncertain footsteps. The prison doctor stood by his side and called a four-wheel cab.

"You are sure," he said, "that you have somewhere to go to, Rowan?"

"Quite sure, sir," the man answered.
"Keep your courage up, my man,"
added the doctor. "If your friends can
afford it, go down to the south at once,

You will find it easier there. There's your cab. You have some money, have you not?"

"Plenty, thank you, doctor," Rowan answered. "You've been kind to me, sir," he added. "Thank you!"

"There wasn't much I could do," the doctor answered, helping him into the cab, "except to get you out of this hole. Make the most of your time now. Good luck to you!"

The cab rolled off. Rowan, after the first few minutes' exhaustion, due to his unaccustomed preparations, leaned forward on the seat, looking out with hungry, wistful eyes upon the world which he had scarcely hoped to see again. Very soon the full flood of London traffic was flowing past him, the streams of men and women jostling one another upon the pavements, the long, tangled thread of moving vehicles, Copyright, 1990, by Irrns 1800vrs & Co.

taximeter cabs, hansoms, and wagons. The sun was shining, the faces of the people seemed to him, accustomed to the white, hopeless countenances of the men he had passed in his daily exercises and in the prison infirmary, unusually buoyant and cheerful. It was a glad world, this, into which he had come, a world which he was so soon to leave. It was hard to think he was free only that he might crawl away into some corner where he could die.

The cab stopped at last before a block of offices in a by-street of the city. Rowan reluctantly alighted, and crossing the pavement entered the building. He passed through a swing door to a desk. A small boy poked his head out of an inquiry office.

"Can you tell me if Miss Rowan is employed here?" Rowan asked.

"Yes, but you can't see her," the "She's in with small boy answered. the guy'nor now."

Rowan hesitated. "Perhaps you will kindly tell her, when she is dis-engaged," he said, "that her brother is here, and would like to speak to her for a moment."

The office boy withdrew his head, but he seemed uncertain. Rowan seated himself upon a hard bench set against the wall. On a small round table in front of him were pens and paper and a copy of the trade journal. Rowan turned over its pages listlessly for a moment or two, and then set himself down to wait. It was quite half an hour before a door in front of him opened, and Winifred Rowan appeared. She looked at her brother in blank astonishment. She was paler than ever, there were dark rings under her dilated eyes. She looked at him as one looks upon some strange monstrosity.

"Basil!" she murmured. "It can't be you! And yet-Basil!"

"It is I," he answered. "Free?" she cried.

He laughed a little bitterly. "They have let me out to die," he answered. "The doctor to-day signed a certificate that I have no reasonable chance of living longer than another month, so here I am, free, Winifred, if you like to call it freedom."

She came and sat on the bench by his side. At that moment it was hard to say, from their appearance, which of the two seemed the nearer death.

"When were you released?" she asked.

"Half an hour ago," he answered. "I came straight here. I wondered whether you could get a month's vacation, and come with me somewhere south. We have enough money for a little time."

"If they will not let me go," she answered, "I will leave. That is simple enough. We have enough money, Basil. We will go this afternoon."

He shook his head. "First," he said. "I must see-I must see-

"Whom?" she asked.

"A friend," he answered, "some one who may be inclined to do something for me-not for myself," he added hastily, "that, of course, is ridiculousbut it is of you I am thinking, of you after I am gone."

"I shall be all right, Basil," she said, "We have several hundred pounds left, you know."

"It is not enough," he answered firm-"Winifred, will you go on an errand for me?"

"Where to?" she asked, with a sudden sinking of her heart.

"To a man whose address I will give you—a rich man, a great man. I think that he will be willing to do something for us. His name is Stirling Deane. I will write his address down for you."

"Mr. Deane!" she repeated. "I have been before to see him, Basil. I went

before your reprieve came.

"Of course," he said. "I had forgotten. Well, I want you to go up to him now. I want to see him, but I do not want to go to his offices. Where do you live, Winifred?"

"It is an apartment house for women only," she answered. "I cannot take

you there."

"Then we must go to a hotel," he said. "It seems a mockery to buy clothes, but there are one or two things

I must have. To-morrow we will go somewhere south."

She glanced at the clock. "I will see whether I can get away now," she said.

She disappeared, and came out again in a few minutes with her hat on.

"Come," she said.

He led her to the cab outside. "We will drive to a hotel," he said. "When we have taken some rooms, you shall go and see Mr. Deane. I think that he will come to me if you will tell him that I am free, that I have only three weeks to live, and that I should like to see him."

"Very well," she answered.

They stepped into the cab. "Tell him to drive to one of the large hotels," Rowan said, "any except the Universal."

She shuddered as she gave the order. She, too, had her memories of the Universal, of which he knew nothing. Slowly they made their way eastward. The girl held his hand in hers.

"It is good to see you again, Basil,"

she said.

"It is good to be here again," he answered, "to be out in the world, even though it be to die. I suppose the authorities have really been kind to me. It is as much as any one could expect. And yet, Winifred, I should like you to remember this always. The quarrel between Sinclair and myself was of his seeking—not mine. The blow of which he died was struck purely in self-defense. I could box and he couldn't, or he would have half killed me that night."

"I know," she answered breathlessly.

"Don't talk of it."

He went on, as though not hearing her: "He came at me with both hands clenched, and I hit him under the chin. I had to, or he would have killed me if he could. He was a strong man, and he had been drinking until he was half mad. It was not my fault, Winifred."

"Oh, I know that!" she said. "Try and forget it now. It was a wicked, wicked accident."

"Life has been wicked enough for

you and me lately," he answered, sighing. "You are worn to a shadow, Winifred. I suppose it is this wretched typing, day by day. We must put an end to it."

She shook her head. "I must earn a living, dear," she said. "But don't bother about me. I shall be all right. See, he has stopped. This must be—yes, it is the Grand Hotel. Will that do?"

He nodded. "Quite well," he an-

swered.

He paid the cabman, and making some excuse at the office about luggage to come, took rooms. Then he put Winifred into a hansom, and wrote down for her Deane's address, which she already knew.

"Bring him back with you if you can," he begged. "Bring him back here. I shall be waiting in the reading room, just round the corner there to

the right."

She hesitated. "You look so faint, Basil," she said. "I am not sure whether I ought to leave you."

"I am going to have some brandy and milk," he answered. "I am going to sit down and have it there in that corner. I shall wait till you come. You will know where to look for me. Hurry, dear, please. I shall know no peace until I have seen Deane."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Deane sat at his desk, immersed once more in the affairs of his great business. His cheeks were bronzed with the sun and heather-scented wind. His eves were clear and bright. All traces of the unsettlement of those few nervous weeks seemed to have passed away. One thing only occasionally disturbed him-the non-appearance of Winifred Rowan. Since those few seconds of tremulous excitement when they had stood face to face in the darkened room of the hotel, he had neither seen nor heard from her. He could understand her having left the hotel hurriedly. He could have understood her keeping away for a day or two. But a whole month had passed, and she had taker

no steps whatever to communicate with him. He had left exact instructions as to what was to be done should she come to the office while he was in Scotland. He had had the whole of his private letters forwarded, lest by chance a word from her should fail to reach him. There was something a little ominous in this absolute silence, something which troubled him occasionally, which set him thinking, wondering whether under that still, quiet demeanor there might be qualities of which he had taken no account; whether indeed she, too, were not a schemer who meant to make the most of this opportunity which chance had thrown in her way.

A clerk entered and stood at his side. "A young lady is here to see you, sir," he announced. "Miss Rowan."

"Miss Rowan," Deane repeated mechanically.

"Yes, sir," the clerk answered. "We have instructions outside to let you know if she called at any time."

Deane leaned back in his chair. With a few quick words he dismissed his secretary from the immediate business in hand. "You may show Miss Rowan in." he said.

A moment or two later she entered. Deane watched her with a new curiosity as he rose to his feet. She was as quietly dressed as usual, as pale, and her eyes, except for one upward glance, seemed always to be seeking the carpet. There was something curiously negative about her appearance-something, it seemed to him, almost willfully so. The rich brown hair, which had flashed almost to golden in the morning sunlight at Rakney, was drawn up and concealed, as though the owner's sole object was that it might escape attention. Her clothes were not unbecoming, but they were the quietest of their sort. Her eyes, which should have been beautiful, were so perpetually veiled and hidden that their quality was lost. Both physically and in her reticent speech she appealed to him more than ever that morning as a woman whose desire seemed to be to creep through life unnoticed.

"At last!" he remarked, holding out his hand pleasantly. "I have been expecting to see you for some time, Miss Rowan."

"You have been expecting to see me?" she repeated, raising her eyes to his. "How strange!"

"Why strange?" he answered, glancing around the room and lowering his voice a little. "Don't you remember at our last meeting you promised to bring my tea a few hours later? Since then I have not even seen you, nor have you sent me a line."

She raised her eyes again and looked at him. They were very beautiful eyes, but he did not understand the somewhat blank expression which shone out of them. "I do not understand you," she said quietly.

Deane would have been irritated, but something in her manner struck him as so strange that his feeling turned to one of bewilderment.

"Come," he said, "you are not going to suggest that I have been dreaming, or that you have had one of these fashionable lapses of memory? You remember meeting me in that room in the Universal Hotel?"

Without change of countenance or expression she answered: "I have never been in the Universal Hotel in my life!"

Deane looked at her, his lips a little parted, and as he looked his feeling of bewilderment grew. "My dear young lady," he protested, "do you mean to tell me—."

"You have been mistaking me for some one else, I think," she said calmly. "There are so many people about who are like me. We will not talk of this just now, if you do not mind. I have come to you from my brother."

"Well?" said Deane.

"My brother is free," she went on. "He was released at nine o'clock this morning. The doctor at the prison signed a certificate that he has only a month or so to live. He is free on the understanding that he goes away to some quiet place. He came to me an hour ago. It is at his wish that I am here."

"Go on," Deane rapped out,

"He wishes to see you," she said.
"That is all. He does not think that there is any risk about it, under the circumstances. We are staying for the night at the Grand Hotel. To-morrow we shall go down to Devonshire or Cornwall. He will be glad if you will come and see him as soon as possible."

"I will come," Deane said, "but first, Miss Rowan, I must have an under-

standing with you."

"An understanding with me?" she

repeated slowly.

"Naturally," he answered. "I want to know, first of all, whether you are my friend or my enemy; whether, in short, you mean to play the blackmailer, or whether you mean to return to me that document which you abstracted from among Sinclair's effects."

She drew a little sigh. "I am quite sure now, Mr. Deane," she said, "that you are mistaking me for some one else. I do not know what you are talk-

ing about."

Deane was silent for several moments. He was feeling nervous and disturbed. There was something uncanny about this quiet, persistent denial—the still face, the steadfast, beautiful eyes, which seemed yet like unlit fires devoid of sympathy or apprehension.

"I scarcely know," Deane said, "how we are to continue this discussion. For some reason or other, you are sitting there within a few feet of me and denying something which we both know to be the truth. You have a motive, I suppose, but whatever that motive may be, you cannot imperil it by speaking openly here. We are absolutely alone. There is not a soul within hearing. You and I both know, Miss Rowan, that you hold that paper to obtain which your brother risked his life and met with such misfortune. It would be his wish, I know, that you should give it to me. The terms I offered him for its recovery were surely liberal. If you think otherwise, tell me your price. We are alone. You are not giving yourself away. Tell me your price!"

"I have no price, Mr. Deane," she

said, "because I have no paper. I am not a thief, nor have I stolen anything from anybody. All that you say is strange to me. My brother is waiting, and he is very ill. Will you come with me now, or will you follow as soon as you can?".

Deane leaned back in his chair and laughed. It was not altogether a natural laugh, but it was the only relief he could find from his overwrought

feelings.

"What sort of a game you and I are going to play, Miss Rowan, I cannot imagine," he said. "I have made the first and the obvious move, and you have declared your opening. We must let it go at that, I suppose. When you are disposed to talk common sense. I and my check book will be glad to listen to you. In the meantime, let me beg of you one thing, and that is, keep that paper in some safe place."

She rose to her feet with a little sigh, "You are mistaking me for some one

else, Mr. Deane," she said.

He crossed the room and fetched his hat and gloves from a cupboard. He glanced into a looking-glass for a moment to straighten his tie, and met the girl's eyes fixed upon him. He stood quite still, watching. She was looking at him, at his back, as he stood there. There was expression in her face at last, an expression which puzzled him, which he failed altogether to understand. He stood quite still, with his fingers still upon the sailor knot of his tie. As though she realized the possibilities of the mirror, she suddenly turned around. When he came toward her, the mask, if it was a mask, was there once more.

"If you will come with me," said he, "I should be glad to go and see your

brother."

They passed through the offices side by side. Many curious eyes followed them. Deane paused at one or two of the desks to leave a few parting instructions. Then he handed the girl into the electric brougham which was waiting at the door.

"The Grand Hotel," he told the man.

He got in by her side.

"Miss Rowan," he said, "you are beginning to interest me exceedingly."

"I am sure that you cannot be in earnest" she answered, without turning her head. "I am a most uninteresting person, living a most uninteresting life."

"I think you said that you were a

typist," he remarked.

"I am," she answered. "I am employed by Messrs. Rubicon & Moore in St. Mary's Passage. I have been there for three years."

"With occasional holidays," he re-

marked, with a smile.

She shook her head. "The only holiday I have taken," she answered, "was

when I came to see you."

He deliberately leaned forward to look into her face. The memory of that moment when he had held her in his arms, the breaking of the storm, the thrill, the wonderful, unanalyzed excitement which seemed to play about them like the lightning which was soon to flash across the sea and land, came back to him. He looked deliberately into her face—still as the grave—at the large eyes, which were listlessly fixed upon the streaming people.

"You are the most amazing person!" he said softly. "Perhaps, as you were never at the Hotel Universal, you were never in Rakney? Perhaps it was not you who came to me with the storm, who tapped at my window, who stood there like the daughter of the storm

itself, who---'

"It was I who came to Rakney," she said. "You know that very well, Mr. Deane. Neither have I forgotten it. But I think that you should not remind me just now of that."

Of course she was right, but Deane felt a little unhinged. Her invulnera-

bility was maddening.

"Perhaps not," he answered. "Perhaps I have no right to remind you of that night, of the time when you crept in from the storm, crept into my arms."

She turned her head slightly away, as though interested in the passing throng. No flush of color tinged her cheeks. Her straight, firm lips never trembled. He tried to take her hand—small it

was, and incased in old, neatly mended gloves. She drew it quietly but firmly away. She remained silent.

"Perhaps I have no right," he continued, "to remind you of these things, but neither have you the right to deny our later meeting. You are playing some sort of a game with me," he continued, a little roughly, "and your methods, whatever they may be, include a lie. Therefore, I myself take license."

"If you have quite finished, Mr. Deane," she said, "I should be glad. My visit to you, and all the circumstances connected with it, is one of the things which I wish to forget."

"To relegate to the same place in your memory," he remarked, "as your brief essay in the rôle of a chambermaid."

She leaned out of the window, "Here we are," she remarked. "I am anxious about my brother. Please hurry."

CHAPTER XXIV.

Rowan sat still in his corner, and although the hotel could not be called fashionable-perhaps, in these laters days, scarcely luxurious—the little ebb and flow of life upon which he looked seemed tinged with a peculiar bitterness. His hollow eyes followed each group of these men and women, so full of vivacity, of happiness, of affairs. The envy in his heart was like a real and passionate thing. It was an envy scarcely founded upon comparisons. For them was life-for him was none. In front of him always was that ghastly, unchanging verdict; a month—two at the most-thirty days of ill health, of suffering, of weakness, and after that-what? He caught his breath with a little shudder, and calling a passing waiter, ordered some brandy. He looked around and longed to find some one to speak to, some one to occupy his attention for a single moment, to stop the flow of gruesome fancies which seemed always biting their way into his brain. He had faced death readily enough in those old days, when Dean and he had ridden side by side, and the bullets had whizzed around them like

rain, and the dead men lay in heaps. But this was different! The blood ran warm in their veins then, their hearts were strong. He had no strength now to battle with these fancies, no strength to do anything but cower before the slowly coming, grisly shadow of his fate. He looked continually at the door, longing always for the return of his sister and the coming of Deane. Even the prison hospital was better than this.

A girl passed by, young and beautiful, carrying in her arms a little dog. She threw a compassionate glance at Rowan, and he felt the sweat break out upon his forehead. It was too awful, this! He was rising to his feet even as Deane and his sister entered the lounge. He moved toward them with

uncertain footsteps.

"We must have a sitting room," he said. "I cannot face these people. I am beginning to feel a coward."

Deane went to the office, and very soon they found themselves upon the third floor, in an apartment overlooking Northumberland Avenue, gorgeous with plush and gilt mirrors, stiffly arranged chairs, an ornate chiffonier. Rowan, who had come up in the lift muttering to himself, but obviously anxious for silence from his companions, threw himself, almost as the door closed, upon the hard couch.

"I am broken!" he cried out. "I am

broken!"

Winifred sank on her knees by his side, her arms went round his neck. Deane turned away and walked to the window a little awkwardly. Somehow he felt that it would be taking a mean advantage if he should look into her face, though all the time he was longing to see if her eyes had really softened, if those lips were really trembling a little, lips that were pressed to her brother's forehead.

"Basil," she whispered, "you mustn't! Bear up, please. Mr. Deane is here.

Sit up and talk to him.'

Rowan pulled himself together. He sat up, and Deane, obeying a gesture from her, crossed the room once more.

"Rowan," he said, "I am very sorry to see you like this." "It's my first day out," Rowan answered. "It's a little trying, you know, especially when the end is so near. I wanted just a few words with you, Deane. It is good of you to come."

Deane nodded. "I only wish there

Deane nodded. "I only wish there was something I could do," he said.
"There is nothing," answered Ro-

wan.

The girl turned away. "When you want me, Basil," she said softly, "I

shall be in the next room."

"You might have some brandy brought up," he said. "I must talk for a few minutes, and I am not feeling very strong."

"I will ring the bell in the other room," she said, "and order it."

She disappeared through the connecting door. Deane, who had found himself watching her slow, even progress, turned once more to the man who sat by his side.

"I never thought I'd see you again," Rowan commenced. "I did my best, Deane. I made friends with Sinclair all right—he was glad enough to have any one to drink with—and before long he began to tell me about his claim to the Little Anna Mine."

"Did he believe in it?" asked Deane.

"Absolutely," Rowan answered. "I am quite sure of that. He absolutely believed that directly he put it into the hands of any solicitor, you would have to come to him and buy, even though it cost you half your fortune. He was waiting those few days to see if you came."

Deane nodded. "Tell me how it hap-

pened," he said.

"It was like this," Rowan continued, speaking hoarsely, and with difficulty, "that night he wasn't quite so drunk. I pressed him a little too closely about his claim, and where he kept the paper. He was suddenly suspicious and quarrelsome. He tried to turn me out, and when I wanted to soothe him down, he struck me. He was a strong man and I was weak. I think that he meant to murder me. I remember I was half on the floor. My forehead was bleeding already, and he was coming toward me, shrieking with rage. 'I am going

to finish you!' he called out. Then I struck, hoping only to stun him, and, as you know, the blow killed him. I forgot for a moment about the paper. I thought only about making my escape. I had bad luck, and I did not succeed. I am afraid it was a bungling sort of job, Deane."

"I am very sorry indeed," Deane said, "that I ever suggested it to you."

"It wasn't your fault," Rowan answered. "Nothing of this sort would have happened if he hadn't come for me. I meant to rob him if I could—I'll admit that—but no more. You see it was useless for me to try and open negotiations. He was too confident altogether. He spoke of a million pounds as his price. Tell me," he went on, "how do things stand now? Who has possession of the paper?"

Deane hesitated for a moment. "I

do not know."

Rowan's face fell. He seemed disappointed. "I had an idea," he said slowly, "that you might have made some attempt to recover it. Everything was left in the room at the hotel for some time. It was easily done."

"I did make an attempt," Deane said slowly. "I have searched the room for that paper, but failed to find it."

"You yourself?" Rowan asked ea-

gerly.

"Yes. I heard that there was a claimant coming for Sinclair's effects, and that they were going to be removed to Scotland Yard. I took a room at the hotel, and I got hold of a key. I went through everything the man had."

"It was in the breast pocket of his gray coat, underneath the lining,"

Rowan gasped.

"I found the place," Deane answered,

"but it was empty."

Rowan wiped the sweat from his forehead. His breathing was becoming difficult. Already the excitement was affecting him. "But it was there on that night!" he exclaimed. "He took off his coat a few minutes before, and I saw him feel it in the lining."

"All I can tell you," Deane answered, "is that the lining of the gray coat was torn, as though something had

been abstracted. The paper was not there. It was not anywhere in the room. I ran a risk," he continued, after a moment's pause, "which I dare not think of, even now, but it was in vain. Some one had been before me."

"Was there any one else upon the

scent, then?" Rowan asked.

"Can you think of any one?" Deane asked.

Rowan looked at him with distended eyes. "You don't mean to insinuate," he began, "that I—that I had given it away?"

"Not willfully," answered Deane.
"Is there any one at all to whom you

spoke of this?"

Rowan shook his head. "Only to my sister," he said, "and she is as silent

as the grave."

"Nevertheless," Deane said, "the paper has gone. Some one has it—is holding it now—for a purpose, I suppose. There can be but one purpose. Perhaps," he added, "you had better ask your sister, to be quite sure whether she ever mentioned its existence to any one."

"We will ask her at once!" Rowan exclaimed. "I will ask her before you. Let me get up. Help me. I will fetch

her."

Deane stretched out his hand. "No," he said. "You must not excite your-self, Rowan. I will knock at the door and call your sister."

Rowan lay back, gasping. Deane crossed the room and knocked at the door which led to the inner apartment.

"Miss Rowan," he said.

She opened the door almost immedi-

ately. "Yes?"

Deane stood aside. "Your brother," he said, "has a question to ask you!"

CHAPTER XXV.

Winifred came slowly into the room. It seemed to Deane, watching her curiously, that she had been steeling herself to defiance. There was no change in her expression, and her lips seemed tighter drawn than ever. She went at once to her brother's side.

"You have been talking too much,

Basil," she said. "You know that it is

not good for you."

He leaned across to the little table which stood by his side and helped himself to brandy. He was indeed looking terribly ill. The lines under his eyes seemed traced with a coal-black pencil, and his hand shook so that half the brandy was spilled.

"Winifred," he said, "I must ask you a question. You remember that I spoke to you of a document—Sinclair had it. I was trying to deal with him, trying to get it back for Mr. Deane here."

"Yes," she answered calmly, "I re-

member your speaking of it.

"We have reason to believe," he continued, gasping a little, "reason to believe that it has been stolen. Mr. Deane wants to know whether at any time you have mentioned its existence to any one."

She looked at Deane and back at her brother. Her face was unchanged. "No," she said. "I have mentioned it

to no one.'

"You see," her brother continued, "it's like this. No one but I knew of that paper. Deane here told me, and I told no one except you. And yet we have evidence, we know that it has been stolen from Sinclair's room since his death. That is why we want you to be quite sure that you did not mention its existence to any one."

"No mention of it has crossed my lips," she answered. "I have no friends, no confidants. I have spoken to no one about it. Nothing in the world," she continued, "would be more improbable than that I should have done

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He turned to Deane, who stood by

with impassive face.

"You hear?" he exclaimed. "You hear? I was quite sure about Winifred. She doesn't go talking about. She's no gossip, are you, Winifred?"

"I hope not," she answered.
"I have no reason, I am sure,"
Deane said slowly, "to doubt Miss

Rowan's discretion.'

She raised her eyes for a moment, and met his. The faint satire in his tone was intentionally provocative, but it failed to move her. Her regard of him was entirely impersonal. He looked away with a light shrug of the shoulders.

"Well, Rowan," he said, "it seems there is nothing further to be done. If the paper does turn up," he added, "I shall know how to deal with its holder. In the meantime, about yourself."

Rowan laughed a little hysterically, "About myself," he repeated. "That's

a fruitful subject, isn't it?"

"Doctors make mistakes some times," Deane said. "Let us hope that they may have made one in your case. Anyhow, there is no reason why you should not be comfortable, and have the best medical advice. Go wherever you think best, and send me your address. I shall not forget that your accident took place when you were engaged upon my affairs."

"You are very good, Deane," Rowan

said.

The girl looked up. "Mr. Deane's kindness is quite unnecessary," she said. "We are in no want of money."

"Your sister does not quite understand," Deane said, turning to him. "We have been through too many rough times in Africa together to stand upon ceremony now. You will perhaps be able to explain to her later on."

He took up his hat and turned toward the door. "I shall expect to hear from you as soon as you have decided where to go—either from you, Rowan," he added, shaking hands with him, "or from your sister."

"You are very kind, Deane," Rowan said. "I am sorry I have made such a

mess of things."

"It was not your fault," Deane answered. "Good day, Miss Rowan!"

She looked at him for a moment, but did not offer to take his outstretched hand. He smiled, and withdrew it at once.

"Good day, Mr. Deane!" she said. The door closed behind him. Rowan was watching his sister anxiously.

"Winifred," he said, "what is the matter with you? You were scarcely civil to Mr. Deane."

"Oh, I think I was," she answered.

"In any case, we don't want to take alms from him, do we?"

"It isn't exactly that," Rowan objected.

"It is."

"He can afford it," Rowan declared.
"He is very rich. A thousand pounds to him is like sixpence to us."

"It doesn't alter facts," she rejoined.
"I do not like Mr. Deane, Basil. It is
through him that this trouble has come
upon us. You have taken enough of
his money."

"And when I am gone?" he asked.

"What about you then?"

"Have I ever failed to make my own way?" she asked quietly. "I shall be

safe enough, Basil."

He commenced to cough, and very soon further speech was impossible. He was painfully exhausted. She sat by his side until he went off to sleep. Of his hopeless state there could no longer be any doubt. He was wasted almost to a shadow. Even in sleep his breath came heavily, and a fever She stole softly seemed upon him. from his side, and stood for a few minutes at the window, looking out. Below, the pulse of the great world was beating with the same maddening regularity. The stream of wayfarers swept on, the roar of traffic was as inevitable as the waves of the sea. She stood by the window with small, clenched hands. Behind her, his loud breathing seemed to beat out the time toward Death.

Deane himself was one of those wayfarers, but at least his thoughts, as he was being whirled eastward in his brougham, were fixed upon the tragedy which he had left behind him. He knew very well that it was not a question of months but of days with Basil Rowan. Was it only for that that the girl was waiting? Her whole attitude toward him had about it a certain flavor of mystery which oppressed him. It was like trying to face an enemy hidden in a darkened room, listening for his footstep, not knowing whence the blow might fall. Notwithstanding the warm sunshine, he shivered a little as he descended from the carriage and entered his offices.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The girl was sitting in the middle of a hard horsehair sofa, her elbows upon her knees, her head resting in her hands. She looked across the dreary apartment and out of the ill-cleaned windows, with dull, despairing eyes. This, then, was to be the end of her dreams. She must go back to the life which she felt to be intolerable, or she must throw herself headlong into the maelstrom.

There was one other occupant of the room, and, curiously enough, his attitude appeared to be a somewhat similar one. He was a short, thickset young man, with brown mustache, flashily dressed, with a red tie, an imitation diamond, and soiled linen to further disfigure an appearance at no time particularly prepossessing. He was standing with his legs a little apart, looking out into the uninspiring street. hands were thrust deep down into the pockets of his trousers. He had all the appearance of a man who finds the burden of life an unwelcome thing. Presently he began to whistle, not cheerfully, but some doleful air of sentimental import. The girl upon the couch seemed irritated. She herself was in the last stage of dejection, and the sound grew maddening.

"Oh, don't do that, please!" she ex-

claimed at last.

He turned around in amazement, for the first time realizing that he was not alone. "I beg your pardon," he said.

The girl remembered that he was a stranger to her; but, after all, what did it matter? "I asked you to stop whistling," she said.

'He answered "Certainly!" and continued to look at her. She returned his gaze with a disapprobation which she scarcely attempted to conceal.

"Sort of habit I get into," he explained, "when I'm in the dumps."

"Does it do you any good?" she asked. "If so, I'll learn how to whistle myself."

"Meaning," he remarked, "that we are companions in-dumpiness?"

She shrugged her shoulders, but did

not trouble to reply.

"I wish to God," he exclaimed, "I'd

never left Cape Town!"

Then for the first time she looked at him with a gleam of interest, and asked: "Do you come from South Africa?"

He nodded. "I did, and I only wish I were back there. I could always keep my head above water there, but London is a rotten hole. I suppose it's because I don't know the runs," he added meditatively. "Anyhow, it's broke me."

She continued the conversation without feeling the slightest interest in it, but simply because it was an escape —a temporary escape—from her

thoughts. "What did you come over for?" she asked.

"A fool's errand!" he answered. "I lent a man some money—a sort of speculation it was—and I came over to see how he was getting on."

"And I suppose he'd lost it," she re-

marked.

"He's lost himself," answered the man, "which is about as bad. I wish I could lay hands upon him. I'd get a bit of my own back, one way or another."

"London is a big place," she returned. "People are not easy to find unless you

know all about them."

"This man left South Africa only a month or so ago. He gave me an address here where he said I should always hear of him. I've been there nearly every day. He turned up there all right regularly after he first landed. He hasn't been there at all for two months, and they haven't the least idea where he is."

"You don't even know," she asked, "whether the speculation is successful

or not?"

He shook his head gloomily. "It don't make much odds, so far as I can see," he said. "If it came off, he's bolted with the profits. If it didn't, he's hiding for fear I shall want my money

back again. It's a rotten sort of show, anyway.",

"What was his name?" she asked

idly.

"His real name," the man answered,
"was the same as your own. That is,"
he added, "I think I heard old Mrs.
Towsley call you Miss Sinclair, didn't

She looked at him steadily for several moments without speaking. He was not a person of quick apprehensions, but even he could not fail to see the change in her face. Her lips were parted, her eyes were suddenly lit with an almost passionate fire. The change in her features was illuminating. She was no longer a tired, depressed-looking young woman of ill-tempered appearance. Her good looks had reasserted themselves. Life seemed to have been breathed into her pulses.

"His real name was Sinclair," she repeated softly. "He came from South Africa. Tell me some more about

him."

"Why?" he asked bluntly.

"Because," she told him, "my name is Ruby Sinclair, and I am here on very much the same errand as you. Only with this difference," she added. "I know what has become of him. There are other things for which I seek."

He came over from the window, and stood on the hearthrug by her side. Some part of her excitement had be-

come communicated to him.

"I say," he exclaimed, "this is a rum go, and no mistake! If it's the same man, we may be able to help one another. It's Richard Sinclair I am looking for, called over there Bully Sinclair. He was a man about fifty years old, been in South Africa for the last twenty years, a mine prospector and general adventurer. He'd had his fingers in many pies, had Richard."

"What was he over in England for?"

she asked.

The young man hesitated. "I don't know that there's any harm in telling you," he said, "only remember it's information for information. I'm giving the whole show away."

"I'll tell you all you want to know,"

she interrupted. "Go on."

"Well," the young man said, "he came over to lay claim to a gold mine that he considered he'd been done out of."

"A gold mine!" the girl repeated breathlessly. "Was it a rich one—very rich, I mean?"

"I should say so," the young man answered. "It was a complicated bit of business-the mine's in other hands. you see-but Sinclair reckoned that he'd got a claim to it, anyway, and he expected either to be squared for a big amount, or to get a syndicate to take the thing up. He came to me dead on his uppers. My name's Hefferom. He and I had been pretty thick at odd times, and though we'd been in a good many deals together, we'd kept friends in a way. He came to me, as I say, in Cape Town, and he told me what the game was. He wanted a matter of two or three hundred pounds to get over to this side, and to start things properly. Well, I thought it out, and though it was about all I was worth in the world, I let him have it. Over he comes. I get a letter from him to say he'd landed, and never another line. I cabled-no answer. Over I came myself, for he'd scarcely left Cape Town before a little affair that I was mixed up in went plumb wrong, and I lost every penny I'd got left. So over here I come, and I've been here a fortnight, and I tell you Sinclair seems to have vanished from the face of the earth. The worst of it is," he continued, "I'm stony broke. I've got to leave this place today because I can't pay my bill, and I've no idea where to raise a sovereign."

The girl's sense of humor triumphed for a second over her excitement. "There are your diamonds," she reminded him. "I heard you talking about them at dinner the other night. One of them you said was worth a

hundred pounds."

"A bluff," he answered readily. "They are false, every one of them. I talked like that to get old Mother Towsley to let my account go on a bit, but

she wasn't doing it. Now, I say, I've told you my story. Tell me why you are so keen on knowing about it.'

"Yes," she said, "I will tell you. My name is Ruby Sinclair, and I am the niece of the man whom you have come

to England to find."

He made use of an oath for which he forgot even to apologize. "You know where he is!" he exclaimed. "Come, remember it was a fair bargain. Information for information!"

"He is dead!"

The young man staggered back. His first emotion of shocked surprise lasted only a few seconds. Anger and disappointment took its place. "Dead?" he exclaimed. "And my money-what about that? What he left belongs to me, anyway. It's got to be made up. I can show you his note for it.'

"You had better wait," she answered coldly, "until I have told you every-thing. I suppose you don't read the papers?"

"Never," he answered. "What good

are they to me?"

"They might have been of some use on the present occasion," she answered. "They might at any rate have saved you from wasting a good deal of time. My uncle was murdered in the Hotel Universal by a man named Rowan.'

The young man swore again-fluently, volubly-swore until he had come to the end of a varied and extensive vocabulary. When he had finished there were an excited flush in his cheeks

and a bright light in his eyes.

"By Rowan-Basil Rowan?" he exclaimed. "He was one of us out there when we were prospecting up the Newey Valley. Look here," he con-tinued, "you and I have got to have this out. Murdered, was he? Well, I'm the man that may be able to throw some light upon that. What's happened to Rowan? Had he anything to say?"

"I will tell you all that I know," the girl answered. "My uncle wrote me directly he arrived in England. He told me that he had been fortunate in Africa, that he had come to take possession of a large fortune, and that he

would be sending for me in a very short time to live with him, and that, as he had no other relative. I should be rich all my days. I replied, of course. asking whether I could not come at once. He wrote me again to tell me to wait for a day or two, until his affairs were settled. Then I heard no more. I waited. I wrote again, I waited, and wrote again. There was no reply. I found afterward that my letters had never even been called for at the address where he told me to write. Then one day a stranger who was staying at Rakney told my uncle there to look at the papers. We found the story of his murder. He had been dead some time.

"Rowan was tried, I suppose?" the man asked. "Did he say what his motive was? Has he been hanged?"

"He insisted upon it that it was a quarrel," the girl said. "I do not believe him. He was found guilty and reprieved. I saw in the papers last night that he had been released. I believe that he has only a few days to live."

"And you?" the young man asked.
"I came up," the girl said slowly, "to take possession of my uncle's effects."

"Have you got them?" he asked breathlessly.

"Yes," the girl answered.

"There were papers?" he demanded. "Some," she answered, "but none of

any importance.'

He looked at her suspiciously. She shrugged her shoulders. "Look here," she said, "I am telling you the truth. Look at me, look at my gloves—mended half a dozen times. Look at my clothes, just hanging on my back and no more. If there had been a single thing among my uncle's papers on which I could have raised even a five-pound note, do you think that I should be sitting here like this, wondering which might be the quickest way out of the world?"

The young man moistened his lips. He was obviously in a state of excitement. "Listen," he said, "among these papers was there a sort of deed on yellow parchment paper, roughly written with a government stamp in the lefthand corner, a paper which spoke of a gold mine called the Little Anna Gold Mine?"

She shook her head decidedly. "There was nothing of the sort."

Then the young man swore again, and this time he seemed to surpass himself. "Your uncle was robbed!" he exclaimed. "Robbed of that paper! I tell you," he added, "he was murdered for it, and for no other reason!"

"How do you know?" the girl cried. "Why, it's as simple as A B C," he explained. "He had the paper in his possession when he came to England. The mine has been claimed by a great syndicate who are working it now. He came to see them, to make terms. The next thing we hear is that he is murdered and the paper is gone. They thought that no one else knew of it. Young lady," he exclaimed, "you may thank your stars, as I do, that you and me have come together. We'll have justice, and we'll have that fortune vet!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

With his feet to the sea, and his head pillowed by many cushions, Rowan lay in a long invalid chair at the edge of the little strip of shingle which separated the tower of Rakney from the sea. Every limb was at rest, every nerve seemed lulled into quiescence. The sun and wind had left their traces upon his hollow cheeks. It seemed, indeed, as though Death had lifted her hand from his forehead. It was only when one looked closer that one realized his terrible weakness, realized how slender, indeed, the thread was by which he held on to life.

There was scarcely a breath of wind stirring. The sun was high in the heavens, and the whole country seemed lulled into a state of almost unnatural repose. The distant trees were motionless, as though, indeed, they were simply painted things against that background of deep-blue sky. The smoke from the little cluster of cottages crept upward, straight as a ruled line. The cattle in the fields seemed all asleep,

exhausted by the unexpected heat. The sea was like a lake, unruffled, almost

unrippled.

The man dozed, and Winifred sat by his side, with her eyes fixed steadily and yet absently upon the distant horizon. A week, at most, the doctor had given him, and after that—what? She looked backward to the window—the window through which she had entered on that wild night earlier in the year. She looked away again uneasily. She was afraid of such moments as these. It was to escape from them that she had protested so vehemently against their accepting Deane's offer of his cottage.

At low tide, a rough, pebbly road led from the village to the cottage, as well as the dike footpath higher up. Along this came two people, a man and a woman, mere specks at first in the distance, but rapidly becoming more and more evident. They walked fast, and they looked always anxiously toward the tower, which stood out at the end of the road against the background of the sky—a curious, almost uncanny,

sort of building.

"If they see us coming," said Ruby Sinclair, "they will certainly try to prevent our seeing him. Our only chance is to come upon them unexpectedly. They can watch the dike path from the front, but few people ever come by this road. It winds about so, and it is generally thick with sea mud."

The man nodded. He, too, was keeping his gaze fixed in a strained manner upon their goal. "Now that we are so near," he said, "so near to him, we will make him speak. We will not be driven away. He cannot escape from us

there.'

There was a curious air of determination about these two, a certain grimness which seemed common to both of them, as they hurried along the rough, stone-strewn road. They had reached the last hundred yards now, and their course was perfectly straight. They walked single file along the little stretch of marshland which served as a footpath.

"He is in front, lying on a chair,"

she whispered. "They won't be able to get him in now before we are there."

The road terminated suddenly upon the beach. The man and the girl scrambled up a little shingly mound. When at last Winifred heard the sounds of their approach, they were already between her and the house. Any attempt at escape was useless. She came a few steps toward them.

"Who are you, please, and what do

you want?" she asked quickly.

Hefferom stretched out a hand toward the prone figure of Rowan, who was lying there still with closed eyes. "We want a few words with your brother," he said. "We shall not keep him long, but it is very important. We have come a long way to see him."

"It is impossible," she said firmly. "He is very ill indeed. The doctor allows him to see no one. I don't know how you found your way here, but you

must please return at once."

"I have come a long way," Hefferom

said slowly.

"I am sorry," she answered, "but can't you see that it makes no difference? If you were to ask him questions, he is not well enough to answer you—scarcely to understand. Any sudden shock at all—even a recognition—might kill him."

Hefferom hesitated no longer. He pushed Winifred away, and motioned to Ruby to follow him. At that moment Rowan opened his eyes and turned his head. Hefferom walked toward

him and leaned over his chair.

"You remember me, Rowan?" he said. "My name is Hefferom, Steve Hefferom. We were up the Newey Valley together, camped out, you know, at Prince's Gorge, for more than a month—you and I and Deane, and a lot of us."

"I remember," Rowan faltered, trying to raise himself. "Yes, I remem-

ber."

He had a fit of coughing, Winifred passed her arms around him and held him up. "If you stay," she whispered to Hefferom, "you will kill him. He ought not to speak even a sentence."

"It isn't much we want him to say,

miss," Hefferom answered doggedly, "but there's a question he's got to answer. If he is as near death as you say, it can't make much difference what happens, and it means more than death to me and to this young lady."

Rowan had recovered sufficiently to drink from a glass which Winifred had handed to him. He turned once more

toward Hefferom.

"That is all finished," he said painfully, "those days. I am ill—too ill to talk, too ill to think, too ill to live!

Please go."

Hefferom bent over him, "Rowan," he said, "you and I were never enemies, even if we didn't exactly hit it off together. Listen to me for a moment. Sinclair borrowed my last three hundred pounds in Cape Town to come over here and lay claim to the Little Anna Gold Mine. He had the government deed with him. I have seen it. I followed him over to claim my share, and I found him dead, killed, and the paper gone. I am not asking you to give away your game, whatever it was, but we want the paper. This is Sinclair's niece with me, and I am his partner. We inherit his claim to the Little Anna Gold Mine, and we want that document."

"The document was not among Sinclair's effects when they were examined after his death," Rowan said. "I did not take it. I do not know what has become of it. That is the truth. Leave me alone now, I cannot talk any

more."

His head dropped back upon his pillow. He was white to the lips. Winifred hurried to his side. Once more

she turned upon the two.

"Are you satisfied?" she cried. "You have nearly killed him—for nothing. I know very well that no document of any sort such as you describe has been found. If Mr. Sinclair ever had it, it was probably stolen from him."

"Stolen, yes!" Hefferom said. "Stolen right enough! That is what we are here about. This young lady is his niece, and I'm his partner. What was left behind belongs to us, and, so far as I know, the only thing worth having

was that document. We want it, and, by God," he wound up, "we've got to have it!"

"Do you imagine," the girl asked, without change of countenance, "that

you will find it here?"

"I will tell you what I do imagine," Hefferom answered. "Men don't commit murder for nothing. Your brother tried to steal that paper, or rather he did steal it. The game's up now. He's no opportunity to make use of it, and it belongs to us. It belongs to us and we've come for it. There, now you know the truth. We've come for it, and we've come to stop until we get it."

Rowan raised himself a little in his seat. "Hefferom," he said, "it's no use talking like that. I haven't got it. I'll be frank, frank as you have been. I know no more than you do who has got it. I quarreled with Sinclair, and he got suspicious. We fought in his room, and the result you know, but I was arrested before I left the hotel. Every one knows that. The paper—I never had it—I never even saw it. Where it is now God only knows. I don't."

Rowan fell back in his chair, coughing violently. For several moments he was incapable of speech. Winifred knelt by his side. When he had finished coughing, she held a wineglass to his lips and made him sip its contents. He lay back now as though completely exhausted. She turned to face these unwelcome visitors.

"You see," she cried, pointing to him," a little more of this and you will kill him. Go away, both of you. He

has nothing to tell you,"

Hefferom laughed a little brutally, "Come," he said, "this game won't do. We are here for the truth, not to be put off with these fairy tales. It is the truth we want, and the truth we'll have, or I'll wring it out of him, even if it kills him."

Rowan's eyes were closed, and he showed no sign of having heard. Winifred stood up boldly before him. "You are fools!" she said. "He has told you all he knows. If Sinclair ever had the deed you speak of, he parted with it to some one else, not to my brother."

"Some one else!" Hefferom repeated.
"Do you take us for fools? If he parted with that deed, he parted with it for a fortune. Where's the money? Show us the deed or the money, and we are satisfied. Show us neither, and we'll not leave this place until he has spoken."

A step upon the shingle behind suddenly diverted their attention. The eyes of every one of them were fixed upon the tall figure who was walking swiftly up the slope. They had been so engrossed that they had not even heard the sound of the motor car which was standing there splashed with mud, and with its engine still panting. With his glasses in his hand, and his long gray coat thrown open, Stirling Deane strode up to them.

"Come," he said, "it seems to me that I arrived opportunely. What does this mean? Who are these people? Miss Sinclair, is this man your companion? What does he mean by speaking in such

a tone to a dying man?"

No one answered him. Hefferom stood as though turned to stone, but his eyes never left Deane's.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Ruby Sinclair leaned forward and touched her companion's back as they flew through the village of Rakney.

"Look," said she, "You see that cottage we are just passing? That is where I have lived for the last four

years.'

Hefferom followed her outstretched finger. He saw the little grove of bare trees, and the marshland stretching out beyond to the bare sea.

"Winter and summer?" he asked.

"Winter and summer."

He nodded. "About time you went fortune-hunting!" he said.

No other word passed between them until they reached the railway station. They descended from the car, and watched it almost immediately swing round and disappear.

"So this is the end of our little excursion to Rakney," Ruby remarked.

"Yes," Hefferom answered. "Aren't you satisfied?"

"Why should I be?" she asked. "What have we gained?"

Hefferom drew a long breath. "Ah, I forgot!" he said. "You don't understand."

He drew her into the refreshment room. She declined to drink, but she sat in a corner while he disposed of several whiskies and sodas. At first he would say nothing, and she waited. Presently he began.

"You think," he said, "that I was a coward, because when Deane bundled us off in his car and told the man to drive us to the nearest railway station, I did not protest. You think that I should have made a scene there? It wasn't worth while. Deane's coming gave the whole game away. Don't you really understand?"

"Not a word," she answered.

"Listen, then. Stirling Deane is the man who is supposed to be the owner of the Little Anna Gold Mine, which was really your Uncle Sinclair's."

She looked at him with gleaming eyes. "Say that again," she said. "I

don't quite understand."

"The deed which is missing from your Uncle Sinclair's effects," Hefferom said slowly, "is the title deed to the Little Anna Gold Mine. That mine was illegally taken possession of by Stirling Deane. He sold it to the company, of which he is now president, at an enormous price. He is the man with whom your Uncle Sinclair came to England to treat. Sinclair was murdered. By whom? By Rowan. Who was at the back of Rowan? Whose tool was he? We know! Chance this afternoon made everything clear to us. Can't you see that Rowan killed your uncle and stole that deed to save Stirling Deane from ruin-at his bidding, as his accomplice?"

"It takes my breath away," the girl murmured. "Now I think of it, of course, it is Deane's cottage they are in. He was there himself only a few weeks ago. It was through him that we heard

of my uncle's murder."

"The whole thing's as simple as A B C," Hefferom declared. "Can't you see that Deane has given himself into our hands? Of course Rowan stole the

deed! Of course Deane has it! He will have to pay for our silence! By God, he will have to pay!"

The girl looked up from her seat on the leather couch, looked at her com-

panion long and critically.

"Do you think we can hold our own against a man like Stirling Deane?"

"It depends upon the cards, and they are in our hands. We must go back to London. We must wait till he is at his office. Then I will see him. You can leave the thing in my hands now. I shall know how to approach him. He cannot deny his friendship with the Rowans. They are occupying, even at this moment, his own cottage. Very likely I shall be able to discover other things connecting him with them. The newspapers you showed me spoke of great influence which was brought to bear on the granting of the reprieve. We may find that Stirling Deane was at the back of that. Anyhow, he is connected closely enough with them. I am here, ready to swear that when Sinclair left Africa he left with the original title deed of the Little Anna Gold Mine in his pocket. I think that the friendship between his murderer and Stirling Deane, who sold that mine for close upon a million pounds, is a thing that will need a little explanation."

"And in the meantime," said the girl

bitterly, "we are starving."

"Not quite," he answered. "We have thirty-eight shillings. That will take us back to London, and find us rooms somewhere for the night. must scrape along somehow until I can get to Deane's offices."

"You are not forgetting," the girl remarked, "that the thirty-eight shillings you are speaking of is my property?"

"We are partners," Hefferom declared. "You shall carry the purse if you will, but there is no object in it."

"You seem to do most of the spending," she reminded him. "If you think that we can afford it," she added, glancing at his empty glasses, "I should like a cup of tea.

He ordered it at once, and sat down by her side. "Look here," he said, "I don't see what you want to be so

blooming stand-off for. Times are a bit rough with us just now, but, you mark my word, we shall pull through all right. This man Deane is in the hollow of our hands. He has been Rowan's accomplice. No one who knows the facts could possibly doubt it. A word from us would ruin him."

The girl sighed. She had drawn a little away from the man. "Do you believe, then," she asked, "that Mr. Deane

has the deed?"

"Either that, or it is destroyed," answered Hefferom. "But don't bother about that. Whether the deed is still existing or not, we know enough to make it worth his while to buy us, even though it costs him half his fortune."

"In the meantime," the girl said, "please get the tickets. The train will be in, in a few minutes."

"Come with me," he said suspiciously.

"Remember we're partners."

"Oh, we are partners right enough," she answered, rising and following him out of the place. "You needn't be afraid that I am going to let you go. Just now you are all that stands between me and a return to Rakney.'

On the way up to town he began to build castles. He was optimistic, sanguine in the extreme. The girl listened almost stolidly. Her companion had begun to depress her. He was badly dressed, his linen was soiled, his imitation jewelry was hideous. He sat opposite her in the train, and there were things in his face from which she shrank. She was more than thankful they were not alone.

"Are you tired, or what?" he asked at last, a little sullenly. "Surely I made it all plain enough? You don't doubt that there's money in this for us?"

"There should be," she admitted slowly. "And yet —."

"And yet what?"

"I have seen Mr. Deane before," she said hesitatingly. "I have talked with him once or twice. Somehow or other, when I think that it may come to be a struggle between you and him-

He interrupted her with a brazen laugh. "You think I won't be able to stand up against him! Well, you shall see. There's a good deal in holding the cards, you know."

"You haven't the deed," she remind-

ed him.

"I don't want it," he answered. "I am not afraid of Stirling Deane. I have known him a good many years, and he knows me. We are up against one another now, and you may fancy his chances; but I tell you my back's against the wall, and his isn't. He's there fighting in the open. I've got him, I tell you-got him!"

She half closed her eyes. This was not the way in which she had hoped to come into her fortune. In her heart, she could not believe a word he said. Deane was a strong man; Hefferom, she was already beginning to discover, was nothing but a bully and a craven. If it came to a duel between the two, she found it easier to believe that Heff-

erom would be worsted.

At King's Cross Station they separated. Hefferom, a little sulkily, accepted his dismissal, and parted with half of the money which he had.

"You can go where you choose," she said. "You can come back to Mrs. Towsley's, if you like, but I tell you frankly that except while we are on business I think it better that we should stay apart."

"I can't see why," he muttered.
"For one thing," she said, "we might be taken for adventurers. I do not know much about the law, but it seems to me you won't be very far out of its clutches when your negotiations with Mr. Deane begin."

"I can take care of myself," he answered gruffly. "Can I see you back

to the old lady's, anyhow?"

"No," she answered. "I would rather go alone."

"Come and have one drink in the refreshment room, just to wish ourselves luck," he begged.

She went in with him and drank a cup of coffee. He had two liqueurs, and would have had more, but she

dragged him sharply away.

"Remember," she said, "that I have nothing more I can raise money on. These few shillings are all we have. If Mr. Deane does not return for several

days, we must leave."

'Deane will come back," he said, with a defiant laugh. "I let him have things his own way to-day, but he knows just where he is. Mark my words, he will be at the office to-morrow morning, and he will be there expecting to see me."

TO BE CONTINUED.



IE MAN IN POSSESSI





HE evening was warm, almost sultry, but Mrs. Cheveral, at her sitting tête-à-tête dinner with her husband, wore a wrap round her shoul-

The marble pallor of her face, perfect almost in line and contour, gave off an atmosphere of gloom and frozen silence which seemed to communicate itself to her surroundings. The white napery gleamed with a frigid sheen, the steel of the cutlery, the splendid cut crystals appeared to dart icy glints as they caught the cold white lights of the electroliers. The room contained hardly any sound, save the muffled footfall of the gliding manservant and the occasional clatter of the covers.

Spencer Cheveral watched his wife closely, but all the magnetic fervor of his glance failed to attract her eyes. The grim, determined air about his mouth hardened as the meal drew nearer to its close. At last the servant retired, and a few minutes later Mrs. Cheveral rose, and, with a faint inclination of her head, prepared to leave the room. Her husband rose as well, made a move in the direction of the door, to open it for her, and then stopped. His manner was abrupt.

Joan, can you spare me a few minutes?" he asked.

"Certainly, Spencer," she replied, reseating herself listlessly.

"Joan, to-morrow is the twentyeighth of July."

'I believe so."

"Doesn't the date convey anything to you?"

She shook her head reflectively, and then uttered a faint exclamation of comprehension.

"Yes, to-morrow we shall be mar-

ried a twelvemonth," he said, watching her keenly.

"What, is it only a twelvemonth?"

"Evidently it seems longer to you." "Spencer, I can't help saying it—it

seems ages and ages."

"I'm sorry. I'm sure I've tried my best to make time go faster; that is, I suppose, more pleasantly for you."

"Oh, yes, you have indeed, Spencer," she admitted eagerly. "You've been kindness and patience itself. You've been a hundred times better to me than I deserve-

"We won't go into that now," he interrupted her. "The point is, that a year has been long enough to give ourselves a fair trial, and the conclusion we must both come to is that the situation is impossible. I'm speaking without any bitterness, Joan."

"I-I don't know what you are driving at. What do you suggest?" she asked, her expressionless voice tinged with just a faint shade of alarm.

"To separate—quietly, of course, and without any fuss. You will stay here, and I'll go away, for a year, two years-in fact, as long as you like. I've got an excellent pretext, if one is wanted. Young Hardacre is getting up a big-game shooting expedition, and I know he'll be glad of my company."

Her eyes opened wide in astonish-

"But why, Spencer?"

"Why?" he echoed, a half-indignant ring in his voice. "You ask why I want to go? Surely you don't mean the question seriously."

He paused, as if to give her time for denial or confirmation. But her per-

plexity seemed to hold her silent.
"Well, then," he resumed briskly, "as we are discussing the matter for the first and probably the last time, I'll give you a plain answer. If my rival were a living man, I'd stay and fight it through to the bitter end. But, seeing that your first husband is unassailable where he is, there's nothing left for me but to throw up the sponge. I have no business here, with another man in possession. Or, if you dislike the phrase, with its somewhat sordid connotation, I'll say that I refuse to go on battering my life to pieces against the headstone on Wickham's grave."

"Yes, yes; I've given you cause to say that," she exclaimed helplessly, piteously. "I ought not to have let him keep his hold on me like that. And I'm afraid his power over me shows no sign of relaxing. It's wrong of him, I know—it's the only wrong he ever did me. But the fault isn't his altogether, is it?"

"Neither his nor yours," he replied soberly. "It's I who made the mistake. I ought never to have come between you. I ought not to have married you, Joan."

She darted him a look of wistful

gratitude.

"Oh, Spencer, you don't know how that comforts me. It makes me a little less unhappy that you should admit the fault is partly yours. It may be cruel of me to insist—but it really was, wasn't it?"

"I will say it again if it pleases you."
"Perhaps you will own it less grudgingly if I remind you how it all happened. You came to me while I was still stunned by his loss. You told me you would not stand by and see me go mad with the sense of my loneliness. You said you had a claim on me because you had loved me all along."

"I did, and I do," he said doggedly.

"And that you were willing to take
the risk. I warned you. It's always
fatal for a man to think he knows a
woman better than she knows herself."

"It appears so."

"And then there were the other circumstances of the case," she went on hurriedly, "the sordidly practical ones. He had left me totally unprovided for. The estate was entailed, and you, his cousin and next of kin, were the heir.

It was simply an ideal arrangement, as you insisted on pointing out to me. I could remain here as mistress, without even a change of name. I—well, I just went with the rest of the property."

"I never made you look at it in that

way," he said curtly.

"Of course you didn't. It was my own view. Only, taking me over as you did, you had also to take over the things that were part and parcel of my life. And I never concealed from you that Wickham, or what was left to me of him, was still all he had been to me when he lived."

"Oh, yes; you were quite frank about

that."

"But there was one thing I never told you," she continued, with a little sob; "one thing which you probably never understood—what it was in Wickham that made my love follow him beyond the grave."

"No, Joan," he said bluntly; "I confess I could never understand that."

"Perhaps I don't quite understand it myself. And that's why I am all the more convinced that I am justified. I only know that his love has wrapped me round like a mantle. No evil could touch me. I felt as safe as if I saw sheltering angels stand by me on either side. I could have cried when I saw the humility, the abject gratitude almost, with which he accepted my trust in him. And his solicitude! I never inquired into his affairs. I was only aware that he was director of several companies, the business of which took him all over the country, sometimes even abroad. Much as I know he longed to do so, he was never selfish enough to subject me to the unnecessary fatigue of accompanying him. And, sitting alone at home, I had ample time to ponder over his goodness.

"I dare say that had its effect." She did not appear to notice that

faint irony of his words.

"But if he bound my heart so strongly by the way in which he lived, he did so more by the manner in which he died. For some time I could see that he had been fighting bravely against

some secret trouble. True to his principle, he tried to keep it from me, and I, to help him, pretended not to see it. I waited, thinking that in the end, when he could no longer bear it alone, my help would be doubly valuable. And here it was that he showed me the real greatness of his heart, the immensity of his love. He held on, lulling me back into false security by his fortitude, till, it seems, there came some catastrophic pang-the soothing drug was handy-I'm sure he meant no more than to tide the agony over momentarily-and that was how the dreadful blow fell, and felled me. He died because he did not want me to share his

"Rather a queer way of showing his -his solicitude, eh?" queried Cheveral

"What do you mean?" she cried, her eyes blazing up. "He never intended to die, to leave me. It was an acci-The verdict said so. I won't have you question the nobleness of his

"I don't. It's not worth while ques-

tioning anything now, I think."

The sullen nonchalance of his manner had a strange effect on her. She went up, and touched him gently on

the arm.

"Forgive me, Spencer," she said. "For all I know, you are as good as he. Only, when two men who are equal run a race, it's the one who has the start that wins. He had a long start of you. But-who knows? One day you may still catch him up."

"Thank you. And meanwhile, I think, I had better go away."

"You insist on that?"

"Yes. If you won't see me for any length of time you may get yourself to believe that I, too, am dead. The dead, it seems, have a better chance with vou.

She gave him a long look, to which he found it difficult to attach any certain meaning, and then, without another word, she walked slowly from

the room.

After a moment or two of irresolution, Cheveral followed her example.

His thoughts would be able to run a freer course in his study, a big room on the ground floor, through the broad French windows of which aromatic waves of perfume came billowing in from the garden at the back of the house. But he had scarcely set foot in it when a strong feeling of distaste came over him. This had been Wickham's study as well. The arrangement of the furniture was as his dead rival had left it. He took up a cigar and flung it back into the box, as he remembered that it still belonged to the stock the other man had laid in.

Never had the smoldering jealousy against his predecessor flamed up as it had done to-night, when he realized how far he still was from supplanting him. Yes, he had been running the race, running it with every ounce of endurance that was in him, and he had not gained an inch. If only he could get himself to believe that he was beaten by a better man he would take his beating more lightly. But, scanning microscopically the Wickham Cheveral he had known, from boyhood almost down to his latter end, he could find nothing to make him a fit object of hero-worship, a fetish. He recalled the many meannesses that had earned for Wickham the sobriquet of "The Worm" from his schoolfellows. At Oxford he had borne the reputation of a sanctimonious bounder. Later, in the larger sphere of the world, he had shown a wonderful knack for setting men's nerves on edge. But with the women he had won all along the line. He snared them by the snave lubricity of his manner. He entangled them by the punctilios of his petty courtesies. The fascination of his soft brown eyes seemed to mirror the boundless sympathies of a generous heart.

And yet, Spencer Cheveral felt that, in adding to the list of his indictments, he was in reality only piling up excuses for his wife. He had from the first loved her for the womanly woman she was. She proved herself now only the more as such by venerating in her first husband the qualities it behooved a true woman to venerate in a true man. Perhaps—Cheveral set his teeth grimly at the thought—her instinct had been right, after all. Perhaps Wickham Cheveral had been all she imagined him to be. Cheveral felt how ignoble it was to malign a man whose lips could never again speak in his own defense.

Oh, it was a bad business altogether, and the most he could do was not to make it worse. Well, he had done so. With a little hiss from between his narrowed lips, he sat down to write his letter to Hardacre. A knock interrupted him, and a footman entered, bearing a card on a tray. Cheveral took it up.

"Miss Iris Everett."

He turned the card over and over, shaking his head. The name on it conveyed nothing to him.

"Whom does she want to see?" he

asked finally.

"Mr. Cheveral, she said, sir."

"Well, show her in."

He looked up in mute astonishment at the little hurricane of flounce and lace which presently darted into the room. The visitor, in her turn, repaid his look of surprise with interest. She stopped abruptly in her rush, her mouth half open, her eyes staring wide in evident consternation. He rose, and stood waiting for her to collect herself.

"Well, madam?" he asked at last.
"But you're not Wicky Cheveral!"
she exclaimed.

"I didn't say that I was."

"But it's Wicky I want to see. You're

the wrong man.

In a flash Spencer Cheveral recognized that he was face to face with a startling development, one which he must treat with the utmost wariness.

"Sit down, Miss Everett," he said quietly. "One moment, please."

Quickly he stepped over to the windows, closed them, and drew the curtains across. She watched his movements closely.

"What's the idea of that?" she asked, with a somewhat uneasy laugh, when

he came back.

"Now we can talk. You want to see Mr. Wickham Cheveral."

"That's what I've come for."

"Well, you can't. Mr. Wickham Cheveral has been dead for two years. I'm his cousin."

Her face was a study of blank incredulity.

"Dead!" she echoed. "You're jok-

ing."
"It's hardly a subject to joke about,

s it?"

"N-no," she admitted reluctantly, with still lingering traces of disbelief. Then a sudden thought seemed to flash across her brain, and she asked quickly:

"What did he die of—was he ill?"
"Not any bodily illness. But I understand he was suffering mentally. His death was accidental. An overdose of chloral, it would seem."

"By Jove, so he really meant it!" she exclaimed, in an awed tone.

"Meant what?"

"He took you in. He never died accidentally. He killed himself, as sure as you and I are alive."

He rose and towered over her, al-

most threatening.

"Miss Everett, you're saying some funny things. I'm afraid I can't continue this talk about my dead relative till you tell who you are."

She was gazing thoughtfully at the floor, all the sprightliness gone from

her manner.

"Oh, I don't mind telling you. I and poor Wicky—" She broke off and darted him a defiant look. "Well, you're a man of the world, and I needn't beat about the bush. Wicky looked after me, and jolly handsomely, too. Servants, motor, and everything else. For about two years, I should say."

"Well?" he prompted her.

"Well, what? Oh, you want to know the rest. He was a dear good boy, was Wicky, and I liked him better than I ever did any other man. But that didn't stop me from being a beast to him in the end. I don't know exactly how it happened. I didn't grow tired of him, but his soft, purring ways seemed to get on my nerves. I felt I had to get away from him or I should do something desperate. And just then a good chance offered, and I told him

I would take it. He said that if I left him he would kill himself. And he did, poor boy—and all through me!"

She dabbed a tiny handkerchief to her eyes. Her grief seemed genuine

enough.

Cheveral's breath came fast. He scrutinized the woman before him, trying to reconcile her with the possible phase of Wickham's mind which had made him seek compensation for her in death. It was not beyond his conception. He vaguely felt the power which that hauntingly exquisite face—though ravaged already, despite its youth, by the wear and tear of a tempestuous life—might exercise on a wayward and invertebrate nature that had fallen beneath its spell. He pulled himself together. This was not the time to indulge in abstractions. The issue was too real.

"But what was your idea in turning up here?" he asked her brusquely.

"I didn't know he was dead, did I?" she replied almost resentfully. "I've been abroad all the time, traveling all over the world, and I only came back this afternoon. The first thing I'd made up my mind to do was to see him, and ask him to make it up with me. Oh, I know he'd have done it, in spite of everything. Besides, I'm clean broke," she added, naïvely inconsequent. "I've hardly enough to pay my taxi outside."

"And you had the face to come to this house?" he said sternly. "Didn't you

know he had a wife?"

"Of course I knew. If he hadn't, he'd have married me like a shot. He told me so dozens of times. But you're quite right—I shouldn't have come here. I might have got him into a bother," she went on, wrinkling her delicate brows. "Fact is, I never thought about his wife. You see, I never think. Thinking makes you old before your time, doesn't it? My way is just to do a thing and not to worry about consequences."

His brain was in a turmoil, but he had sufficient clearness of thought to see what his first obligation was—to get this woman out of the house as

speedily as possible. She seemed to have no intention of taking the initiative. He walked over to his writing desk. As he unlocked an inner drawer he heard the whirring of his motor car, as it drew away out of the garage. His wife was evidently going to make a call. Well, why not? It was only a little past nine. Where she was going was, of course, no concern of his. Their ways lay asunder in the highroad of the world as in the reclusion of the home. He came back to his visitor, a bundle of bank notes in his hand.

"Miss Everett, you were good enough to confide in me that you were temporarily embarrassed. May I accommodate you? I've come into all Wickham's money, and it's only right I should oblige his—his friends."

"Oh, thanks, that's awfully decent of you," she said, taking the notes without the least demur, and crumpling them carelessly into her reticule.

"But, of course, you will understand that this closes our acquaintance, and that you must not look on this as a precedent."

"Indeed I won't. I'm not that sort,"

she retorted haughtily.

"Thank you, Miss Everett. Permit me to see you out."

He led the way, and, having closed the street door behind her, he stood still for a moment or two, and then threw his head back in an attitude of suppressed merriment. Heavens, it was enough to move the gods to Homeric laughter! This Bayard, this paladin without fear and without reproach—at least, according to his widow—snuffed out by the antics of a feather-brained, mercenary little minx! And all the time he had been wearing snugly his halo of chivalry—the sly dog! Here was tragedy turned into a farce, the strutting hero into a clown—and with a vengeance.

And so, by a sudden and dramatic turn, he had won the game, just when he considered it hopelessly lost. All he now had to do was to tell his wife. Yes, tell his wife. He, as it were, revolved the words several times on his tongue. To his astonishment, they

came each time less trippingly. The thing was not quite as simple as it looked. Perhaps with the average sort of woman it might have been. But his wife could not be measured by the ordinary rule. She was living in a topsy-turvy world of her own making. There was a strong chance that she would take an upside-down view of the whole affair. He must not forget that he was coming to her as the assassin of her dearest illusion.

With a savage gesture, he snatched up his hat, and flung out into the street. How could one think clearly in this house close packed with the lumber of stale hypocrisies and self-deceptions?

It was near on midnight when he returned. At his entrance he was met by a message that Mrs. Cheveral wished to speak to him in the drawing room. He was not surprised; there was nothing unusual in the request. Perhaps some household matter about which she wanted to consult him. Perhaps a check for one of her pet charities. He walked in resolutely, his face set masklike to conceal whatever traces it might still show of the grim struggle through which he had gone since he had seen her last.

She was standing at the open window. A cool night wind blew in, and he noted with a vague sort of wonder that she had doffed her habitual wrap. She seemed to have passed out of her state of continual shivers. He thought also that there was a distinct change in her bearing. Her arching neck had regained something of the queenly poise he remembered in her brighter days. Her pale-gold hair gleamed with a renewed luster. He set his teeth tight. It would tax any man's strength to give up such a woman, especially when by every rule of human and divine justice he had a right to her. She remained with her back to him.

"Well, Joan?" he asked a little curtly.
"I could not go to bed without apologizing to you, Spencer," she said quietly. "I left you rather rudely before."
"Oh, is that all? No need to worry

about that," he replied lightly.

She remained silent. The pause suddenly brought home to him that she had called him for a far graver purpose than to indulge in a commonplace of everyday politeness. He waited. It would be easy for him to say the wrong thing and commit himself.

"Is—is there anything you wish to tell me?" she asked at last.

"No," he faltered, rather taken aback by her question. "Or, perhaps, on second thoughts, there is."

She faced him sharply, with a tense, expectant look he had never seen on her face before.

"I happened to meet Hardacre at the club. It's all arranged. We start next Wednesday."

"Oh!"

There was a note of disappointment, he almost fancied of pain, in her exclamation.

"Then you are really going?"
"I am."

"Must you—is there nothing to induce you to stay?"

"What should there be? What you told me before can only strengthen my decision. I'm feeling more like an interloper than ever. I'm going away because you have established the other man's claim. You have made me get an insight into your conscience. My presence here is making you feel as if—as if you were living in a state of bigamy."

She seemed to come to a sudden resolution.

"Spencer, if you won't tell me, I must put the question to you direct: Who is this woman who was here tonight?"

"This woman?" he stammered.

For an instant a wild hope stirred him that the question was prompted by a touch of pique, perhaps even jealousy. But he immediately dismissed the notion as absurd. Its place was taken by a sense of danger. How she was tempting him to bring to her the cruel disillusionment which his reflections that evening had told him might mean to her a mortal blow. He felt the moment required heroic measures.

"Miss Everett is a lady I used to

know," he said steadily. "To be quite candid, I should say-well, that she was a youthful indiscretion of mine."

She sat down limply, almost on the verge of collapse. He gazed at her astonished.

"What's the matter, Joan? It isn't a nice thing to say, I know, but-"

"One lies only to those whom one despises," she interrupted him, with trembling lips. "Despises?"

"But it doesn't matter—I know everything," she went on, clasping and unclasping her hands.

He stepped back awestruck and si-

"I was taking a walk in the garden," she said in a faint monotone. "I saw her come into your room, and then I heard his name mentioned. I didn't mean to play the spy, but I couldn't help it. In your hurry you did not close the windows tightly enough. And there I stood, rooted to the spot, and when I heard as much as I needed to hear I tore myself away. I ordered the car."

"I know you took the car," he mur-

mured vacantly.

"And waylaid her as she left the house. I followed her taxi, and spoke to her. She took me to her rooms. There I found all the proofs I wanted. And you knew-and said nothing!"

"I meant it for the best," he said sul-

lenly.

"For the best! To leave me in ignorance-not to speak the word that would set me free! Oh, I might have expected it. What is a man to know of the workings of a woman's soul? Did it ever occur to you that there is no more cruel tyranny than the tyranny of the dead? I suppose you have no idea how often I have gone down on my knees, praying to be delivered from it. to be allowed to step back from among the shadows into the sunshine, and to consort again with living men instead of ghosts.

Joan!" he exclaimed.

"No, for all you cared, I might have gone on writhing in my chains to the end of my days, and even when you had the chance you would not stretch out a rescuing hand. I should never have known but for an accident-and

that of my own making."

He looked at her hard, and then, moving away from her, broke into a short burst of laughter; there was such a wealth of irony in this sudden turning of the tables. He had thought he would merely have to protect her, and now, strangely enough, he had to lift the cudgel of self-defense. Her eyes followed him, with brows raised in indignant surprise.

"I am glad you find me amusing,"

she exclaimed.

"No, Joan, that I don't—upon my word, I don't," he replied, turning to her instantly. "I don't think that either your best friend or your worst enemy can accuse you of having been amusing for the last two years. I'm just laughing at myself. You are a witness to the rare and delectable spectacle of a fool laughing at his own

"I don't understand," she said, with

a gesture of weariness.

"I mean that after wasting this whole mortal evening in priming myself with reasons why I should not tell you, you calmly-no, excuse, not very calmlyaccuse me of neglecting my duty.'

"Reasons why you should not tell me?" she repeated slowly. "In Heav-

en's name, what reasons?"

"Do you really want to know?"

"I am asking you."

"Well, then, you will first have to answer one of my questions. Supposing I had come to you with this amazing story, would you have believed me?"

"Perhaps not," she replied, after a

short pause of reflection.

"I thought so."

"That is, perhaps not at first," she added quickly. "But you had your proofs-the same as I had."

"I know I had. But the point iswould you have looked at them in the

same way?"

"What do you mean?" Her perplexity was growing visibly.

"That there was all the difference in

the world between my telling you and your finding out for yourself. What was fit and proper in you would have seemed mean and unmanly in me. With me it would have been a sacrilegious burrowing among the secrets of the grave. For all I know, you might have suspected that I had gone about deliberately to rake up this unsavory history. And you might not have believed the contrary, however much I protested. All the time there would perhaps have been only one thought in your mind: 'Here's a man who wants to go big-game shooting, and qualifies for it by playing the ferret.'"

She looked at him, tense and star-

"You see, there is something in what I say," he continued, interpreting her look. "After all, I knew you better than you knew yourself. Oh, don't think that I want to take credit for any magnanimity to Wickham. Frankly, I meant none. I only meant to serve my own purpose. If you had seen me in a graceless and ungenerous part, his memory, tarnished though it had become, might have regained some of its prestige by comparison with me. I wouldn't run the risk of that. Whatever else of yours I didn't have, I at least had your respect, and I wanted to keep it."

"And—and you looked as far as that!" she whispered, in an awed voice.

"Of course I looked as far," he replied, much more gently. "I looked even further. I remembered what you said to-night—that the day may come when I would catch him up. And that made me cherish a presumptuous hope that the day might come when you would turn and meet me halfway. And that's why I had to be careful. I dared

not let you imagine that I was trying to force my way into your heart—by a back door."

"No, no! I see what you really meant," she cried, a little wildly. "You meant something quite different from that. You wanted to spare me, to save me the shame of seeing myself in all the hideousness of my egregious folly."

"Possibly that may have entered vaguely into my consideration," he said quietly. "At any rate, I will say this, that I should have sacrificed even more than my happiness for the least worthy of your—your ideals."

"Ideals! Generous even to the last!" she murmured, her head drooping low. "No, Spencer, that won't give me back my self-respect," she went on, in the same dull tone. "But perhaps I may do some little toward retrieving it by abasing myself still more, by telling you humbly, abjectly what it was in this that caused me the greatest heartbreak of all."

"Then tell me."

"The thought that you did not speak because you did not care any more."

"And do you still think so?" he asked, gently passing his hand over her hair.

She lifted her eyes. They were wet, but shining with a new light.

"I don't—only I can't believe it. I suppose I have grown so blind groping about in my graveyard that I can't see the truth even when it's staring me in the face. But, Spencer, if it really is the truth——"

"If it is?" he caught her up eagerly, "Then prove it by taking me back into the sunshine where all things will become clear to me. Take me—although I am so small and you so great."

And Spencer Cheveral needed no second bidding.







RECKON the rats et it up, Jim," says this little Sidney Gates, when Jim Slater asks him about the horsehair tassel which has disappeared from

Jim's bridle. And then Sidney he looks sideways at Marie Coombs, swallows a couple times, and says it again.

"I'll set a trap for 'em to-morrow," says he, like he's glad to help Jim out all he can.

And then Marie she looks sideways at Sidney.

"My maw says rats is awful destructive!" says she, noddin' away convincin'.

"Um!" says Jim, judicial. "Rats!" And keeps on a-lookin' at Sidney hard.

"I saw a weasel ketch a chicken once," says Sidney, stout. "He was that big!" he says, holdin' his hands about a foot apart. "Maybe 'twas a weasel, Jim."

"Um!" says Jim. "Now, there ain't nothin' else you thinks of handy, is there, Sidney?" he asks him, serious.

"No, sir," says Sidney, diggin' his toe in the sand. "I can't think of nothin' else just now."

"What's that?" says Jim, sudden, putting his hand up to his ear, like he hears somethin', away off like. And he looks at me'n Lem Rogers scared.

Well, at that I looks at Lem, and Lem looks at me, and I can't think of nothin' to say, and Lem he can't. But finally Lem he says he reckons it's a rooster crowin'.

"Don't you believe it!" whispers Jim, mysterious. "That's a Hoo-whoofer, which is Indian for Lie-ketcher. It does sound somethin' like a rooster, don't it? Listen!" says he, excited.

But we listens and we listens, and don't hear nothin' more. And in a minute Jim looks back of himself sudden and gives a start, and grabs Lem by the arm.

"Lem Rogers," says he, severe, "have you been tellin' a lie lately?"

But Lem says he can't think of none he has to speak of, and I says I can't. And with that Jim looks relieved as the dickens.

"And I'm mighty glad to hear youalls say it," says he, "account for a minute I'm scared cold. I ain't heard a Hoo-whoofer before since I'm a kid, and never in the daytime, and I'm sure for a minute some one round here's been lyin'."

"Wha—what's a Hoo-whoofer, Jim?" whispers Sidney, and he's grabbed ahold of Marie's hand tight, and his eyes is as big as a horse's.

"Sh!" whispers Jim. "Listen!" And then in a minute he sinks back, relieved like. "Great goodness alive!" says he, wipin' his forehead with his handker-chief. "I'm all of a sweat! A Hoo-whoofer," says he to Sidney directly, "ain't a animal, nor folks, nor nothin'. It's just a Thing. Somethin' queer like, only a heap more so. Nobody can't describe it, account nobody livin' to-day ever sees one. You just hears it, and feels it, and wishes you never did. Most everybody hears it some time in their lives, and once is enough, you bet.

"Maybe some time when you ain't pretty careful you tells a lie—not meanin' no particular harm, of course. Maybe it's just a friend of yours tells it, and you never thinks he'd do such a thing. And then that night when you're a-tossin' round on your bed, wishin' you hadn't, or wishin' your friend hadn't—account you knows he knows how wrong it is—all of a sudden, along about twelve o'clock, or maybe it's one, you hears it holler, and you starts up like you're made of springs. And for just a minute, maybe, you figgers it is a rooster crowin', account it sounds almost exactly like one at first. Then you begins to feel creepy like, and you wonders where your maw's at.

"And you hears it holler again, and then it comes over you like a flash it's a Hoo-whoofer hollerin', and you're that stiff you can't even wag your ears. And you shakes and shivers away, and wishes with all your heart you never told that lie yesterday, or your friend hadn't, account now, of course, everybody knows it after hearin' the Hoo-whoofer hollerin' about it to the devil. And you sure hates to get up next mornin' and look folks in the face, when you realizes everybody knows about that lie—or your friend's lie," says Jim.

"How does you know for sure when it's a Hoo-whoofer?" asks Lem Rogers, when Sidney or Marie don't say nothin.' "It's usual for roosters to crow along about that time of night, anyway."

"Oh, you knows, all right," says Jim, "On the days you don't tell no lies, you wakes up in the night and you hears the roosters crowin'. 'Doggone the roosters!' says you. 'I wishes they quits crowin', so I goes to sleep some.' And after a while they quits crowin', and you does go to sleep. But if it's a lie you tells yesterday, you starts up sudden when you hears that cry, and after listenin' a minute, painful, you hears another, and then you feels a little prick in your insides, way down deep in, just after the holler. And you lays your hand over your heart and it's gallopin' away somethin' frightful, and you just can't breathe, nohow. And then the next time it hollers you notes the difference to once, and it's all over."

"And—and—then does it kill you?" half whispers Sidney, awed like. "The Hoo-whoofer, I means."

"No;" says Jim. "You don't sure enough die. But if you don't reform yourself pretty quick after hearin' it folks just looks at you sad like, and feels sorry for you, thorough, and is glad 'tain't them 'ts told a lie and is never goin' to be happy and enjoy themselves any more."

"Well," goes on Jim, risin' abrupt.
"Us fellers has got to go to work."

And with that Jim looks at us, and we looks at Jim, and then we all gets up, quiet, and goes tiptoin' on over to the corral, leavin' them kids standin' there like they're never goin' to draw a long breath again, and Sidney special.

You see 'tain't the first time Sidney has said the wrong thing, and it looks like he gets the habit, easy. Once it's over cigarettes, and once when we finds matches all over the bunk-house floor, and then that time when Jim finds a can of green paint he's been usin' tipped over, and the letters S and M sprawled all over the door. And Jim don't like it.

"Lyin' is a tiresome habit," says Jim. "And besides that it's deceitful."

"How about Hoo-whoofers?" asked Lem, sly.

"Pooh!" says Jim. "Hoo-whoofers is a parable; and a parable is the truth told so you don't get mad about it. And what's more," he says, low, "they get results, frequent, as you sees now by the looks of that there Sidney's face."

And sure enough, here's Sidney comin' across over where we be again, and he looks worried, some.

"Jim," says he, anxious, "what was that—that Thing you says is goin' to holler to-night?"

"It's a Hoo-whoofer," says Jim, sober.

"Well, say, Jim," says Sidney, after a minute, like it's a secret, "don't you tell any one about it, but I got a friend who thinks maybe he's told a lie, and he wants to know if there ain't no way of makin' It not do it? I reckon I can get five cents out of him for you if you knows how," he says, hurried, account Jim's lookin' at him pretty steady.

"You're sure it's a friend?" asks Jim, coaxin'.

"Yes, sir," says Sidney, figitin' round considerable, "He's a sort of a friend." "Um!" says Jim, grim. "You send

your friend to me then, and we talks it over."

"He can't come just now, account he's away off somewheres," said Sidney, hopeful.

"Huh!" says Jim. "I reckon he wishes he's a heap farther off before

this night's over."

"Oh, dear!" says Sidney, tired, a-sittin' down on a bucket. "I thinks you tell a feller's friend, Jim, when he can't come himself. Ain't there no way of gettin' word to him?" he asks, plaintive. "None whatever," declares Jim.

"None whatever," declares Jim. "Hoo-whoofers is mighty particular about folks talkin' about 'em loose thataway; and I got to be pretty careful myself. There's a way, of course." says Jim, "which if it's you now, Sidney, for instance, I reveals freely. But you has to tell it to the feller himself, the same as Henry Peters does to me that time when I'm a kid. You can't take any chances of lettin' it leak out, else first you knows the Hoo-whoofer ketches on, and then you're a goner. You're sure it's a friend, is you?" he asks Sidney again, coaxin'.

But Sidney don't say nothin'. He just sits there with his head in his hands, wretched like. A couple times he gives a start like he's goin' to say somethin', but it seems like the little rooster just can't make it. So he takes it out in swallerin' hard, and finally he gets up, slow, and drags himself to-

ward the house.

"I wish't I was dead!" says he. "Dead and buried!" And he trudges away, heart broke.

And us fellers sits there a while without sayin' nothin', and then finally I looks at Lem, and Lem looks at me, and then we both looks at Jim thataway.

"Oh, I knows what youalls is thinkin'," says Jim. "You can say it if you wants to, too. Sometimes I wishes I was dead myself." says he, bitter.

And with that he goes on in the bunk house and slams the door after him. So Lem and me works along by ourselves, thinkin' a heap, but not sayin' much account there don't seem nothin' to say. Then, after a while, Jim comes on out again, and we all goes to workin' pretty hard, and just before dark Sidney he comes on over again, and that there Marie with him. Sidney he stands round a while, figitin' first on one foot and then the other, and lookin' at Marie sideways, with her a-eggin' him on with her eyes thataway, and finally she gives her head a toss and speaks up herself.

"My maw says there ain't no such things as Hoo-whoofers!" she declares, bold, a-lookin' at Jim defiant. And for a minute Jim's some took back, I as-

sures you.

"You don't say!" says he, after a while. "Then how about me, and Henry Peters, and Jerry Meeks, and Al Waters, them times when we're kids?" he asks her superior. "And how about Henry Peters, special? He says he don't believe in 'em himself, the first time, or lets on he don't. And what happens to Henry? Why, he goes off to bed braggy like as you please. But he finds he can't get to sleep, and he can't get to sleep. And he tosses and listens, and tosses and listens, account after all his braggy ways, he knows, of course, there's somethin' goin' to happen.

"And sure enough, after a while he hears it. And first off he tries to think it is a rooster crowin'. But bein' all dark, and quiet, away in the night thataway, he hears it dreadful plain, and he listens again, and he feels that prickin' I'm tellin' you of, and how his heart's wobblin' round, with no breath to speak of, and then he notes how much different, and queer, and far away, and accusin' like it sounds than a ordinary rooster crow, and he just can't stand it no longer. And he pulls them clothes up over his head and lies there shiverin' till finally he just don't know nothin'. He does, for a fact! He just don't know nothin'!

"And in the mornin' what you reckon? There's Henry's maw a-standin' by the bed a-holding in her hand that half-burned cigarette she finds in Henry's pocket! She does for a fact! And don't you know that's just what Henry tells that lie about to her. Sure it is. And you let me ask you somethin'," says Jim, impressive. "How in the world does Mrs. Peters know that cigarette's there, less'n she hears that Hoo-whoofer hollerin' about it in the night? Tell me that?" he asks her, superior.

"Well, my maw says there ain't no such thing," says Marie, dogged.

"Very good," says Jim. "I got respects for what your maw says, all right, Marie; but the trouble is your maw ain't never been a boy like Henry Peters. Henry was a boy you'd be proud to know, and ask things of, and believe him, utter. And if I'm Sidney's friend I sure asks my maw can I sleep with her to-night, so she's handy; you bet your life on that! Or else," says Jim, lookin' at Sidney hard, "if I'm him I hunts up some one he's been lyin' to and makes a clean breast of it, so he tells me how to make it not holler."

And then, after lookin' at Sidney, coaxin' like, some more, Jim gets up, dignified, and stalks on in the bunk house, and Lem'n me after him. And in about a minute, tap, tap, tap comes on the door, and there's Sidney by himself.

"Jim," says he, "I just wants to ask you one question. If you're me, would you believe Marie's maw, or you?"

And he's that anxious Jim just can't get mad at him.

"Now, you look here, Sidney," says he, "seein' is believin', and hearin' is believin'—sometimes. If I'm you I reckon I keeps my eyes open, and my ears bent forward, and learns by experience, account just now you're sure in what's called a 'state,' and just can't believe nothin' offhand."

But Sidney don't seem quite satisfied at that, and shows it plain. "I wish't I knew," says he, plaintive. "Jim," he says, brightenin' up a little, "if a feller should hear one of them Things in the night, and gets word to you somehow, would you come and tell him how to make 'em not holler right then?"

"Well," says Jim, judicial, "runnin'

round in the night tellin' folks how to stop Hoo-whoofers from hollerin' is far from bein' usual with me; but if the case is urgent, and the feller's a friend of mine who just can't wait till mornin' to quit lyin', why, I goes so far's to say I reckon I does it gladly."

"All right, then," says Sidney, some relieved; "but I wish't I could sleep with you fellers to-night, or I didn't

have to go to bed nohow.'

And he looks at Jim wistful. But just then his maw calls him account it's already bedtime, and after hesitatin' a minute till she calls him again, he goes stragglin' over to the house without another word.

And then Jim he goes to work readin' in a book Mr. Webster has loaned him, and Lem'n me yawns round a while till it gets pretty late, and finally Lem asks Jim ain't he goin' to bed.

"I'm interested in this here book,"

says Jim, surly.

And he won't say another word, but just grunts when we says anythin' to him. So Lem'n me shucks off and

goes to bed.

Maybe it's twelve o'clock; maybe it's one; I don't know. But anyway, all of a sudden I finds myself sittin' straight up in the bunk like somethin's happened; and there's Lem sittin' up in his bunk the same way. And heavens above! How them roosters is crowin'—like their lungs is tin! Ain't it funny how we hears 'em that one night, and usual they crows their doggone hearts out and a feller never even wakes up?

"I reckon that Hoo-whoofer gets more earnest attention to-night'n he's had for upward of some time," says Jim, smilin' toward us, mockin'.

And then he gets up, abrupt, and steps outside the door.

"Um!" says he to himself, after a minute.

And with that Lem'n me gets up and goes out, too, and what you reckon? There's a lamp lit in Sidney's room, and Sidney he's just carryin' on high.

"No-sir-ee!" we hears him sayin', emphatic. "I just got to see Jim!"

And then we hears Mrs. Gates talkin' to him, low like. But every time she

stops a minute old Sidney comes out good and loud how he's just obliged to see Jim. And the way he says it I ain't surprised a mite if the first we knows Mrs. Gates is goin' over Sidney with the flat of her hand till he drowns out them roosters, which are crowin' away like they just finds out they knows

how.

But she don't, evident, for after a while things gets quieted down some, and then directly over comes the cook, mad as the dickens. And that lady begins by callin' us a pack of cattle thieves, and no gentlemen—which is alludin' to the way Lem'n me ain't dressed, I reckon—and a heap of other things before her breath gives out. And then she winds up with orderin' Jim tomarch himself over to the house and stop that racket, and Mrs. Gates is goin' to peal the hide off'n Jim clean down to his toes when he gets there.

"Which I hopes that last remark of your'n is overstatin' it some, ma'am," says Jim, sincere; "but I ain't blamin'

her much if she does."

And with that he starts on over to the house; and, of course, Lem'n me we sneaks on over and stands under the

winder a while.

"Jim Slater!" says Mrs. Gates, severe, when Jim gets in the room. "Will you be kind enough to tell me what you've been up to now—you and them two disreputable friends of your'n?" And Lem nudges me hard.

"He ain't been doin' nothin'," declares Sidney, stout. "It's me! I been lyin' to Jim—that's what I been doin'!"

And then I'm doggoned if that little feller don't break down and cry like the dickens. He does for a fact. And Jim he goes over and sits on the bed, and talks low to Sidney, and Mrs. Gates is lookin' at 'em like she's sure feeling pretty helpless about it.

And after a while Sidney quits cryin', and he says, says he, "Jim," he says,

"does you hear it?"

"Yes, son," says Jim, soothin'. "I hears it."

"And does you know he's hollerin' over me?" he asks him teary.

"I reckon I does, son," says Jim.

"And he was," chokes out Sidney.
"He was, doggone it, he was! That wasn't a friend of mine, Jim, nor nothin'. It was me. I pulls that tassel off myself, and I paints them letters on the door, and I just does everything. And now I never dasts go to bed again," he says, and starts cryin' again.

But Iim stops him in a minute.

"Sure you dasts," says Jim. "And Sid," he says, "I'm mighty glad you tells me this, account now you see I'm free to tell you how you stops him hollerin', permanent."

And with that Jim turns to Mrs. Gates, and after sayin' how sorry he is she's been woke up thataway, he tells her what he's been tellin' Sidney about

the Hoo-whoofer.

"And the rule for makin' a Hoowhoofer stop hollerin' bein' a secret, ma'am, which is handed down to me by Henry Peters when I'm a boy like Sidney, I asks you will you kindly cross the fingers of your left hand and keep your lips shut up tight while I'm tellin' it?"

Well, sir, Mrs. Gates she stands there studyin' Jim's face a while, like she thinks he's crazy. And then we sees her eyes crinkle up some, and her lips twitch a little, and with that she sits

down in a chair sudden.

"Iim Slater," she says, "you'll be the

death of me yet!"

"Thank you, ma'am," says Jim, sincere, and then he turns to Sidney. "Sidney Gates," says he, "havin' now made up your mind to stop lyin', in any form, from now on, in season and out, under pain of not bein' well thought of if you returns to them evil ways, I hereby does the best I can. It's told me by Henry Peters, as I says before, bein' told to Henry by his own maw, after she finds that cigarette that time. In the mornin' you takes a willer stick and draws a ring on the ground outside your winder. Then you takes one big potater for every lie you tells lately 't you remembers of, and lays 'em in the ring a-pointin' toward the west-which is where the sun goes down.

> "'Big potater, take this lie; If I tells another I hopes to die,'

says you then, a-layin' your right hand on each one, and sayin' it over'n over

till you touches 'em all.

"Then you draws a cross in front of each potater with the willer stick. whirls it round your head three times, and sticks it in the dirt on the edge of the ring deep as you can. And there you are," says Jim. "The Hoo-whoofer comes out to holler over you to-morrow night, and it lights on that stick. And the first thing he notes is them potaters in the ring a-pointin' toward the west, and the crosses in front of 'em all plain, and he sees the jig is up to once. Kerflip! comes the lies off the potaters. 'Squawk!' says the Hoowhoofer, a-ketchin' 'em in his bill, and is off toward the west like a shotwhich is the way them potaters is pointin', you understand-and away he sails till he ketches up with the sun, and flip! He heaves them lies of your'n into the sun, where they're burned up in the twinklin' of a eye."

"And then what happens to 'em after they're burned up?" asks Sidney, awed

like.

"Nothin'," says Jim. "Only that's one thing 't makes the sun so hot. If you ever notices it the sun's always a heap hotter in the summer'n it is in the winter. Well, it's account of lies. Sumner is the open season for lyin'. On account of folks bein' pretty busy in the winter, and likewise housed up with people who knows 'em well, lies is futile thataway. But in the summer time they goes scatterin' off foolin' round with strangers, and lies is rampant."

"Well, you bet I never tells another,"

declares Sidney, stout.

"You better not," says Jim, dark.
And then Jim tells him the rule all over again, so Sidney gets it perfect, and then Jim gets up to go.

"Gee!" says Sidney, "I wish't Henry Peters was here to sleep with me to-

night. I'm afraid,"

"Sure you ain't afraid," says Jim.
"If Henry's here he'd be glad to do it,
you bet. It'd remind him of old times.
But Henry not bein' here handy, and

you remindin' me a heap of him, account you're so much alike, why, the next best thing is to do just what Henry done. He knows what his maw tells him is so, of course, same as you knows what I tells is, and he goes to bed after that feelin' just fine. And he lays his head on the piller, calm like, and he stretches himself out in the cool sheets, and he flattens himself out all comfortable, and he says to himself, says he: 'Doggone Hoo-whoofers!' says he: 'Let'em holler. If they does, I knows it's over some one else, account I ain't a liar any more. And I ain't even goin' to lie awake to listen.'

"And with that he smiles to himself, happy like, and drifts off into the finest sleep you ever hears of, till his man has to call him three times the next mornin' before he ever lets on he hears her. It'd sure do Henry good to know how you're a-goin' to sleep to-night, all free from lies" eye line.

all free from lies," says Jim.

And he shakes Sidney's hand, warm.
"How many times does you say his maw has to call this Henry Peters next mornin'?" asks Mrs. Gates, smilin' pleasant toward Jim.

"Well," says Jim, coughin' in his hand. "I says three, ma'am. I knows it's twice, for certain. But now you mentions it, it does seem like I remembers 't that third time was Henry's maw a-packin' Henry's breakfast up to him."

And then Jim hurries on out so quick Lem'n me don't get a chance to get away before Mrs. Gates is right there at the door lettin' him out.

"Jim Slater," we hears her say, low, like she's banterin' him thataway, "how often does you hear that Hoo-whoofer holler yourself?"

And then, when Jim starts coughin' into his hand again, she snickers right

out loud.

"You needn't think up any of your answers for me, Jim Slater," she says, laughin'. "Run along to bed now, that's a good boy."

And after grinnin' sheepish like toward Mrs. Gates a minute, old Jim

done so.





PICTURE show," Compton had called it. Maybe that was his idea of a joke. Certainly it was light and airy persiflage for "Fifteenth An-

nual Exhibition of The American Institute of Fine Arts." Tom Axon groaned as his eyes took in the imposing title on the catalogue in his hand. Then his glance swept the walls about him—pictures upon pictures; and in the room beyond, more pictures; and in the one beyond that still more. He groaned again.

Well, if Compton was an old fossil, he was also an old friend, and he probably couldn't help it if staring at a lot of daubs was his idea of "seeing New York." The boy grinned to himself—

poor old Compton!

Anyway, here he was, and here he meant to stay, until Compton came; but unconsciously his young ears strained for the sounds of the city—the magic city he had come so far to see—and his feet shifted restlessly, as though they felt the suction of the near-by theatres drawing in their throngs for the afternoon performance. With a sigh of resignation he dropped onto a bench commanding a view of the entrance, and looked about him.

The other half of the seat was already occupied by an unusual-looking man of middle age. His face, caught only in profile, pale and sharply cut, gave an impression of physical ill health; but there was abundant evidence of mental vitality in its expression. There seemed to be something odd about his figure; huddled down under a heavy overcoat, the shoulder barely topped Axon's elbow. The boy held his thought suspended a moment

in doubt; then he saw what it was—the man was a hunchback.

At the moment of realization, the stranger happened to turn his head and Axon jerked his own away, flushing with shame that he should be caught noting a man's physical deformity. To cover his embarrassment he held his eyes forcibly on a picture which hung just in front of him, but it was several moments before he had recovered himself sufficiently to really look at it—not indeed until, from the corner of his eye, he had seen his neighbor's head turn away again. Then, for the first time, he saw the canvas before him, and once seen, it claimed his full attention.

It was a portrait; the head and shoulders of an elderly woman. Masses of white hair were intricately coiled above a deeply lined forehead, cheeks and eyes were sunken, and in the neck, fully exposed by an evening gown of yellow satin, the tendons and shrunken muscles of age were frankly indicated.

To Axon the effect was distinctly unpleasant. This was due, he thought at first, to the inappropriateness of the costume to the wearer's years, to the needless display of withered flesh; but as he continued his examination, the white gleam of the hair and the sheen of the yellow satin seemed to sink into the background, to become unessential details in the setting for the face—the extraordinary face!

How alive it was! Its very pallor seemed aglow with vitality, as though a fire still blazed under the burnt-out crust. The black eyes glittered like jet, and their luster emphasized painfully the faded, shriveled skin around them. The nostrils of the long, finely molded nose were dilated as by a quick, excited

breath. The painter's brush had arrested a half smile, or, one might almost say, a smile still-born, it lay so cold and rigid upon the mouth. And that mouth! The young man closed his eyes a moment in involuntary disgust. What ghastly trick of the artist to put those moist scarlet lips into that dry withered face! They were thin lips, sharp in outline, and yet curiously loose and drooping. A hideous mouth, a hideous face, when all was said, and yet—how alive, how triumphantly alive!

He thought of old women he had known; of his grandmother, in her soft black gown, with a bit of white lace at the throat; of her smooth hair and sweet, gentle smile. As the pleasant picture rose in his mind, the woman on the wall seemed to mock him defiantly: "Would you ask me to put on a black dress and a lace cap and sit in the chimney corner?" Good God, no! Axon

shuddered.

Who was she? What was she? He searched his catalogue, but was not enlightened by the single line he found there: "Portrait of a Lady, by Otis Leigh." Perhaps Compton would

know.

The thought of his friend recalled the fact that he was still awaiting his arrival, and he glanced at the entrance and around the room, but Compton had not come. As his eyes returned to the picture before him, he became suddenly conscious that he was being watched, and facing about abruptly, he encountered the full gaze of the hunchback beside him.

The stranger did not shift his glance as Axon had done a few minutes before when the conditions had been reversed. On the contrary, he met the boy's startled eyes with a charming and quite unembarrassed smile, and pres-

ently he spoke:

"I have annoyed you, I fear, by staring at you. I beg your pardon."

Axon murmured a polite response and looked away, but he felt the eyes still upon him, and in spite of himself he turned back to meet them.

"Frankly," his neighbor continued, "my curiosity was aroused by your evident interest in that portrait." He

smiled inquiringly.

Axon hesitated a moment. "Why, yes, it did strike me—rather," he said at last. "Of course," he added hastily, "I don't know much about this sort of thing—don't know anything, I should say—but that picture—I can't explain just why—but it did strike me."

"It is considered rather fair work, I believe," the man began, but Axon in-

terrupted:

"You mean the painting of it, the way it is done? I don't know anything about that part of it. You see this is my first offense, barring a trip to the—what do you call the big art gallery in Central Park! The Metropolitan? Well, I took a shot at the old masters the other day, but that lets me out on art. Why, I never even heard of any of these fellows," indicating by a turn of the wrist the catalogue in his hand.

"You might know all that is worth knowing about the art of painting, and still say that," the stranger answered, with an encouraging smile. "These are

only some of the little men."

"Little or big, it's all the same to me—I don't know much about any of them." He turned to the portrait before them and added: "It isn't to the way that picture is painted that I object—it is to the picture itself."

"Object!" the man echoed in surprise. "What possible objection can you have to such a picture—a simple portrait? I can understand that the subject, an elderly woman, may not interest you—a young man—but—"

"Oh, it interests me all right enough—more than any picture I ever saw. It doesn't seem to be a picture, somehow;

it's too-alive."

"Ah, does it seem so to you?"

The boy nodded, surprised at his

companion's eagerness.

"That's very interesting," the latter remarked. Then, after a moment's hesitation, and in a quieter tone: "I feel it, too."

"But I don't like it, just the same,"

Axon maintained.

"Why not?"
There was perfect seriousness in the

man's tone, but the boy, uneasily conscious of being beyond his depth, misunderstood it.

"Look here," he exclaimed bluntly,

"are you kidding me?"

The man laughed. "No, no, certainly not."

"Because, you know, I told you I

don't set up as a critic."

"My dear young friend, I am not 'kidding' you, as you put it; I should really like to hear your opinion of this picture—or in fact of any picture—and for just the reason which makes you think you haven't a right to an opinion. Having seen no other painting, your judgment of one would necessarily rest, not on a comparison with others, as does the judgment of most critics, but with nature itself. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I think so. You mean that the lady there, to satisfy my primitive taste, would have to stack up with the real

thing."

"Exactly!"
"All right! Then she falls down,"

"So I gathered, But why?"
"Well, in the first place," Axon straightened himself and faced the portrait squarely, "look at the way she's dressed—yellow satin and low neck—at her age! And look at her hair! Imagine your mother rigged out like that—can you? If she wanted to, you wouldn't let her. But I guess there wasn't any one to object in this case; she doesn't look as if she had ever been anybody's mother."

"You may be right—about the gown—from your point of view," the hunchback replied. "No doubt your mother—or mine, as you say—would not be likely to wear it. But customs change with the country and the social class. It would be unsafe to make such a criti-

cism too sweeping."

"All right, I'll grant you the clothes," the boy conceded indifferently. "They are not my chief objection, anyway."

"What is?"

There was a brief silence; then Axon answered slowly, his eyes on the portrait:

"I am not sure that I can tell you

exactly. It is the whole effect, the combination of several things that seem to me—wrong. Take the eyes: I don't suppose there is any natural law against eyes like those. I suppose they could happen in a human head; but I never saw any like them. Did you?"

He faced his listener with the question, but the man was still looking at the picture, and did not turn as he

asked in reply:

"Just what do you think is wrong about them?"

"The expression," Axon answered promptly. "It is such a queer mixture—warm and cold, dead and alive, all at the same time. They are devilish sort of eyes, cruel as sin, and yet you can't keep your own off them. Lucretia Borgia must have looked like that just after she had sent some poor chap to kingdom come."

The stranger turned sharply, and the

boy broke into a laugh.

"I guess that is pretty strong for a harmless old lady in a nice gold frame; but, anyway, I'll bet she was an Italian, or Spaniard—one of the two."

"A foreigner—yes," the man agreed. "Perhaps it is that which makes the face

seem unusual to you.'

"No, I have known a great many foreigners, and they do look different from us, but not unpleasantly so. Say," he broke in on himself with a new thought, "did you ever see a vampire bat?"

"A vampire bat?"

"Yes, in a dime museum—when you were a kid?"

The stranger shook his head in expectant wonder.

"I guess you didn't live in a small town." The boy smiled reminiscently. "I remember one that was advertised as a 'Blood-suckin' Vampire.' They threw pictures around showing it sucking the life out of a sleeping man. By George, it was a nasty little beast, hanging head downward in the cage, and licking its jaws with a long red tongue." He raised his eyes to the painted face on the wall. "That is what this woman's mouth reminds me of."

There was a pause; then the man

answered slowly, as if weighing the criticism:

"The lips are unnaturally red, I grant; but perhaps the lady wore rouge, and the artist has merely registered that obvious mark of vanity along with the more subtle signs of the woman's undying coquetry. But," he paused again and regarded the portrait intently-"a vampire-a vampire! Do you know, that is a very curious idea!"

"It's an exaggeration, of course, but as far as my feeling goes, it about fills the bill. I think it is a horrible face.

Now, honestly, don't you?"

"No!" the response came instantly and somewhat sharply. "On the contrary, I find it most attractive-and suggestive." He turned and continued in a pleasanter tone: "The trouble with that face lies only in your mind. You are young, and when we are young we are apt to resent the assumption of the fire and glow of youth by one that we feel should be done with such things."

"I don't agree with you at all," exclaimed Axon warmly. "What you say may explain my feeling about the dress and the red lips; but, as I said before, it isn't only because the old lady has done herself up like a débutante—that's a detail-the trouble is deeper and

harder to put into words."

"Because it exists solely in your imagination."

"But it doesn't," Axon insisted, smiling, but with the annoyance of youth when forced to defend the ways of youth. "If the man who painted that picture hadn't put certain things into it, how could I have seen them

there?"

"He painted what he saw, or thought he saw-at least that is what he tried to do; but you don't necessarily see what he saw, or thought he saw, for it requires great skill to give to other minds the image in our own. That is the aim of all art-just that. And even if this man had the skill, what is the portrait now that it is done? The record of a human soul, of a human face even? Not at all. It represents merely one man's interpretation of a face-perhaps, of a soul. It registers simply the opinion of this one man-nothing more. And what is that worth, do you think-

one man's opinion?"

"That depends on the man, of course," retorted the boy, aroused and keen for his side of the argument. "One man's opinion is sometimes worth a good deal-on some subjects, and I guess art isn't so very different from everything else. In this case I should say it depends on how much he knew about the woman he painted, and also on how well he could paint. I'd like to compare notes with him. I'll bet I'm not so far wrong. I'll bet his opinion about the lady would come pretty near tallying with mine. It seems to me that I have heard somewhere that there are artists, fine ones, who have a sort of insight into things deeper than other people, who can see beneath the surfacesort of an X-ray,"

The hunchback laughed, "That's a fairy tale, believe me, and popular with the public for that very reason. Do you fancy that any one of us would sit for his portrait, to say nothing of paying handsomely for the privilege, to a painter who possessed such power? Every one of us has something to hide,

you and I."

"And the woman in the picture,"

Axon finished.

"Yes, of course. But what? You say one thing; I, another; the artist, still another. Which of us is right? Who can say, except the woman, and perhaps she doesn't know herself. Each of us guesses, and what does the guess amount to? One man's opinion nothing.'

The eyes of both were on the canvas, and they sat for some time regarding

it silently.

"Still," Axon demurred, unsatisfied, "I wasn't looking for what I saw, and it must be there or I couldn't see it."

"Do you think," the stranger re-turned, "that many visitors here see in that portrait what you see-or think

you see?"

"I don't know," was the reluctant ad-"I never thought a simple portrait could be so-so complicated." He turned to his companion with a smile of surrender as he asked: "What, for instance, do you see-or think you

see?"

There was another period of silent contemplation of the face in the gold frame before an answer came.

"I should say," the man replied slowly, "that it is the portrait of a woman who has been beautiful-very beautiful -and much courted. A woman with an unquenchable thirst for life and youth; one of those unfortunate spirits to whom the aging of the flesh is like the growth of a malignant cancer whose progress nothing will arrest; gnawing at the very roots of life, and yet bringing with it no cooling of the blood, no deadening of desire, no compensation whatever.

As he listened, Axon's body had grown tense with the force of a startling thought, and instantly on the pause, he broke out with the accusation: "You knew her!"

The stranger nodded.

"Oh, I say, that wasn't fair! I'm

"You need not apologize," the man interrupted. "I led you on deliberately. Besides my acquaintance with the lady was unsought by either of us." He looked up at the portrait. "That is a good likeness, I think, but I can see that the painter may have, unconsciously perhaps, emphasized certain characteristics at the expense of others equally apparent to a casual observer." He paused again, as though to balance his judgment with perfect ac-curacy. "Yes, I should say that that has been done." Again he paused, his eyes still on the canvas. "A vampire," he murmured, almost to himself, "a vampire-an absorber of life. What an extraordinary idea!" He frowned, and, turning, studied the face of the boy beside him thoughtfully. "It is interesting to note the fantastic tricks our imaginations will play on us at times. You have been the victim of yours this afternoon, and to prove it to you, I will tell you something of this lady's history—if you are interested." Axon eagerly assented.

"She is of foreign birth—you were

right there-a Cuban, mixture of Spanish and North American Indian. When she was fifteen or thereabout. she was married to a man some forty years her senior. She was probably not happy-I don't know-but no doubt she would have been contented enough with her lot-it was a common oneif she had remained in Cuba, shut in by the customs and traditions to which she had been born. But her husband's affairs brought them to this country about ten years after the marriage.

"It is not difficult to imagine what the change meant to her: the new ideas. undreamed of, and yet so wonderful in their possibilities; freedom of intercourse between the sexes, the facility of divorce. Childless, and little more than a girl in years, by the reckoning of her new acquaintances, her youth, which had never had its day, rose and beat against the bars of what she now, for the first time, felt to be a prison, She saw women all around her, of her own age and older, marrying according to their inclination-but she was already married. She saw others unhappily mated, severing their bonds without loss of social or religious caste -but she was a Cuban and a Roman Catholic. You can see that it must have been maddening to her, being what she was.'

He halted and lifted his keen blue eyes to the black ones gleaming from

the canvas.

"However, fate seems to have been with her, for one day her husbanddied."

Axon stirred uneasily in his seat, and the stranger, suddenly turning, faced him. It was as though the undercurrents of their thoughts had met abruptly, and both had felt the impact.

"She-killed him?" the boy gasped. Then he broke into a laugh at his companion's startled face. "It fits into my theory—Lucretia Borgia, vou know besides something in your tone seemed to suggest the idea.'

"The death was a natural one," the man replied gravely. "If my tone seemed to suggest otherwise, it was because as I spoke I recalled your theory. The death was sudden, but, of course, quite natural—he was an old man."

"I see. What did she do then?

Marry again?"

"Yes, an American. There was a son—I knew him—that is how I happen by my information." His gaze wandered away again to the painted face before them. "He was devoted to his mother; it would distress him to know that any one had so—misread her. That is why I take the liberty of betraying his confidence. There was a strong bond of sympathy between us; he was a cripple, too—born so. His mother was thrown from a horse shortly before his birth; she was very fond of riding."

He paused, and Axon, vaguely uncomfortable, threw him a furtive glance, but his expression seemed quite

detached and critical.

"I remember so well how she looked on a horse, slender and straight in her saddle. She used to ride every day in the Bois, in Paris. They lived abroad altogether after the father's death, and then——"

"What-did he die, too?"

"Yes, there was an accident." He stopped abruptly. The final syllable had been spoken with a curiously startled intonation. His eyes darted to the portrait with a quick, searching glance, and as he held them there his face grew white and his body seemed to sink even farther down into the heavy coat. "There was an accident," he repeated mechanically, "an accident." Then he straightened himself and faced Axon anxiously as he went on: "You see, they were hunting, he and she and the boy. She—stumbled, and her gun—was discharged."

Axon's eyes were riveted on the portrait, wide with a dawning horror.

"Perhaps it was not an accident," he

muttered.

The man's grip closed on his wrist.
"Stop! You don't know what you are saying," he commanded sharply. Then, at the boy's astonished stare, he relaxed his hold and smiled. "Your imagination is playing tricks on you

again; you don't realize what you are saying. You are trying to make the facts fit your theory, which is most unscientific, you know, and leads only to error." His tone became anxious again as he continued: "There was no doubt that it was an accident-such cases are common enough; besides, the boy would have known-he was there, on the spot when it happened. He was the only one who could know, except his mother." Again his eyes sought the woman's face with the same bewildered gaze. "It was a great shock, however -his father's death-he was ill for months. He was never very strong, you see. When his mother married again-

"Again!"

"She was still a young woman and very beautiful. She had grown old when this portrait was done. It gives no idea of what she had been, except as it suggests her extraordinary vitality. No portrait, no description, can do more than that-suggest. There was something indescribable about fierceness with which life burned in her, something primitive, savage. It was as though the torch of her life had been lighted at the unquenchable fire which stirs the motive power of the universe. One world was not big enough: one life not full enough to feed the insatiable flame. I wonder if you at all understand what I am trying to make plain to you?"

He laid his hand gently on Axon's arm, and his voice when he spoke again was low and tense with an immeasura-

de pity.

"Look at her! Those eyes you find so wrong—shall I tell you what is the matter with them? They are the eyes of a woman who has been buried alive."

Axon started, "What do you mean?" he cried in horror, as memories of graveyard stories flashed into his mind.

"Life—what we call life, you and I and the rest of the shadows—was a tomb to her. She spent her days and nights unconsciously beating against the tufted walls of a coffin."

The boy shivered and stole a fright-

ened glance at his neighbor, but the man went on unseeing, in the same monotone of unutterable sadness:

"She didn't know it for a long time; the awakening was slow. For years she struggled against the inroads of the worms about her, crushing when she could not escape them. I do not know what else she could have done."

He paused, and Axon, watching, followed his glance back to the portrait from which the black eyes glittered down at them, dauntless and defiant.

"When she found out at last—she killed herself. What else was left? You cannot live among the dead, can you?"

"My God!" the boy murmured, stunned and almost speechless. "My God!"

But the stranger seemed not to hear. His question had been to himself. Axon pulled himself to his feet and stared around, struggling for a moment for his mental bearings.

"I guess I'll be off," he stammered.
"I've been waiting for a friend,"

The man rose, too, with a slight start, hesitated an instant; then, his poise regained, he extended his hand.

"I hope I have not bored you," he said. "It is not a pleasant story."

"It was very interesting," Axon protested nervously. "I'm sure I'm much obliged to you."

He touched his hat, and sped off toward the entrance as rapidly as the increasing throng of visitors would permit. His purpose was to get into the open, into the sunlight; but on the way he caught sight of Compton, absorbed in a winter landscape, apparently oblivious of his engagement. He joined him at once, grateful for his normal presence, and as they continued a slow and tedious tour of the rooms, the boy kept his eyes open for another sight of his chance acquaintance, listening ab-

sently to Compton's running stream of comments on the pictures as they passed.

Approaching the bench on which he had sat with the stranger, he saw that it was empty. The man had evidently gone. He halted Compton before the "Portrait of a Lady."

"What about this?" he asked.

"Ah!" said Compton at once. "That's the Leigh portrait." He studied the painting in silence for a moment. "That is really very good," he said at last, "the brushwork is excellent—notice there about the chin—then the flesh tint and the sheen of the satin—not bad, not at all bad! Leigh is a very good man, one of the best of the portraitists. His interpretation of character is masterly, and his technique is—"

His words trailed off into an unintelligible murmur as he turned and searched with his eyes among the crowds about them.

"What is it?" Axon asked, vaguely

ill at ease.

"I was looking for Leigh," Compton replied, "I hear that he is in America at present. I thought he might be here to-day, but I suppose not. He is a diffident, shy sort of man—a cripple."

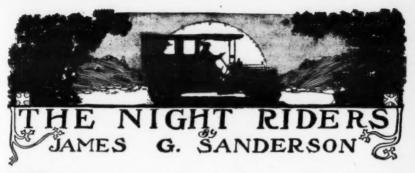
"A hunchback?" the boy gasped.
"Have you seen him? Is he here?"

Compton exclaimed eagerly.

Axon hesitated. "I think so," he answered reluctantly. "There was a man—like that—sitting on this bench when I came in."

"Indeed! I wish I had seen him," Compton said regretfully. "They say that in spite of the deformity he is a very striking figure. A most interesting man, a brilliant artist, but very sensitive, very morbid." He threw a final glance at the painting as they walked away. "A portrait of his mother," he remarked casually. "Rather a charming old lady—eh, what?"







HE Honorable Dennis Coogan pondered the note imperturbably, but Coogan's face was always—or nearly so—a mask. In the last

year Darragh's house had drawn him; for, on an occasion, a twelvementh or more since, it had been suddenly borne in upon him that Eileen's eyes had the look of the gray of the seas in them, that her laugh held the sound of the brooks of Sligo, that her hair was as the deepening dusks of the moors, and that her cheeks mocked the petals of the wild rose.

And that Eileen Darragh should have turned to him was natural. He was old enough to have borne a closer relationship to her than that of her father's best friend; if the gods had willed it his own daughter might have been born first. But "Uncle Denny" from Eileen's lips sounded differently than the words looked written. In ink, they struck him boldly, emphasizing the difference of age; spoken, the lilt of Eileen's voice had long since made him forget it.

He began again.

DEAR UNCLE DENNY: Once you told me that I should call you if ever I were in trouble and if ever I needed you. I promised you I would. And now trouble lies black upon me, and I am calling. Be at the Bournetown crossroads in the car, alone, at eight to-night

For a moment he frowned in thought, and, placing the note in its envelope, appeared to consider the superscription. He was too honest with himself to bear with deception; he admitted all that she meant to him, and for a year he had faced it, firm in the belief that in his life the time for that had gone by and locking his secret behind the gates of enforced paternalism. If Eileen had suspected him it was not for the lack of effort on his part. He glanced at the clock on the wall of his den. It wanted but thirty minutes of the appointed hour. For five of these he sat with his ear to the receiver of his desk telephone, postponing his evening's engagements. Then he called the garage.

"In ten minutes, Mickey," he said. "Have her full of gas and see to it that the acetylenes are in shape. Put in the light robe and leave her in the drive."

The crossroad was five miles away, but the Honorable Dennis Coogan had no doubt of making it in time. The police of Dalton and the constables of Bournetown turned away when the gray car passed. It lies among the privileges of the politically great to forget the speed laws, for to make or break a policeman is not overly difficult when for years one has been, almost by way of exercise merely, creating and deposing senators, congressmen, judges, and others of their ilk. Coogan held many overdue mortgages on the city of Dalton and the county of Luzawanna.

As he waited, Éileen's face rose before him. He suspected the Geary boy, for of late the Geary boy had been growing accustomed to the pathway across Darragh's lawn. The picture they had made the night before under

the soft light of the piano lamp came back to him, and the look on the boy's face as he turned her music had been a betraval. It was the look that Coogan had been thrusting back from his own eyes for a year. When the last word was said, the Geary boy was clean and honest, and if unworthy it was only with an unworthiness shared by all mankind where Eileen was in question.

And so he had watched, from where he and Darragh smoked on the piazza, seeking to surprise a like confession in the occasional glance which she threw backward over her shoulder as she laughed with the younger man. Comradeship had been there, and he fancied more, but she had not gone to the gate with him. Instead, she had joined them on the piazza, and had sat humming folk songs beneath her breath as

they talked.

The roar of the waiting car called him to his feet. He drew on his gauntlets and went into the summer night. Mickey Calligan stood aside, and drew his sleeve across his nose-Mickey was eternally dragging his sleeve across his nose-as he sped out into the darkness. The crossroads lay before him, and he drew the machine by the signpost on the stroke of eight. Presently Eileen stepped from the shadows into the glare of the lamps, and Coogan advanced to meet her.

"Uncle Denny," she gasped, and

stood trembling.

Coogan took in the traveling dress, the veil, and the dainty silver-mounted bag at a startled glance. His heart sank. Clearly here lay more than a lovers' quarrel, and Eileen's eyes were shining with the light he had watched for when she played for the Geary

She came to him, half shyly, and looked beseechingly up into his face.

"I knew you'd come, Uncle Denny," she said.

"Faith, thin, I'm here," admitted Coogan cautiously. "What now?"

The girl laughed softly. "Now to

Midvale," she said.

With the most matter-of-fact manner in the world, Coogan turned to the car,

and consulted the gasoline gauge. Mickey had filled the tank flush.

"Come, thin," he replied briefly.

For a few moments the ruts of the road demanded all his attention, and the wheel under his hands struggled for its freedom. But with the passing of a half mile they swung into the pikestraightway and soft as velvet with its coating of oil. The girl relaxed her grip and leaned back.

Are you not going to say anything at all?" she asked disappointedly, as her companion continued to ignore her

presence.

Coogan drew his eyes from the road

for a scant second.

"Faith, Eileen, I'm your chauffeur; I'm not getting my pay for talkin'," he

said unemotionally.

The girl stamped her foot. "Denny!" she cried in disgust. "Do you care for anything on earth but your game of politics? Don't you even want to know what this is all about?"

Coogan drew the car down to four miles, and left it to its own will for a moment. "I want to know," he said, "whatever you want to tell me. But I must know what Darragh thinks of

this.'

Eileen laughed light-heartedly. "If I tell you on my honor that father will not mind, will that be enough?"

"Ave," said Coogan gravely, you say that, you can have the car and

me until doomsday."

Another silence fell, and for a space the hum of the gears and the whistle of the soft summer wind rose alone into the night as they swept onward in the silver pathway. Eileen stole an occasional timid glance upward, but Coogan's face was expressionless, and his forward gaze intent upon the road.

"'Tis sixty miles to Midvale, Den-

ny," she said at length.

"Two hours," commented Coogan noncommittally.

"'Twill be late to get to a strange town at night."

For reply he opened the throttle, and the car fairly jumped from the ground.

"But it will not matter," continued Eileen.

The car came down to its former

Eileen turned on him in vexation. "Can you talk to-night only by jumping this thing backward and forward, Denny?" she cried. "Don't you want to know why I'm running away to Midvale like this? Don't you want to know why I've taken my traveling bag?"

"For to-night," said Coogan evenly, "this is a taxicab and I am the chauf-

feur."

"You don't know what I'm doing, and you don't even care," declared the

girl in solemn surprise.

For a moment the strain proved too great, and Coogan turned on her. Eileen?" he said fiercely. "Care, "Care? You haven't even the bit beginning of an idea of how much-Am I not Billy Darragh's best friend?" he ended lamely.

"Yes," said Eileen demurely, "I sup-

pose you are."

For a further space silence fell. Coogan reflected cautiously upon the break in his fences and upon the most plausible method of repairing whatever damage might have been done. It was not within his conception that Eileen could care-he had come to the definite belief that it was the Geary boy-and the lines of his mouth strained in his decision not to cost her unhappiness by a revelation of his own feelings. He enshrouded himself more deeply in the cloud of paternalism.

"Why should I not care? And have I not always been like another father

to you?" he continued gravely.

"I could not say so thruthfully, Denny," replied a small, stifled voice from the darkness.

The car swerved. "What'll you be meaning?" said Coogan in sudden fear. "But I may have been always like a daughter to you," Eileen continued.

"You-I-

Coogan groped for the meaning, found one, and abandoned it, saw another and rushed back to the safety of ' that which he had discarded. Perplexity and perspiration crowned his brow, and to cover them he turned again to the road. It became suddenly difficult

to draw breath, and the blood pounded his veins. This was clearly not the sort of thing Coogan was Her ungloved hand clung to the partition of the bucket seat; and for an instant swayed him fiercely toward acceptance of the meaning he so madly wished for. Then the hand with its mate went up to cover a bowed face. and her figure trembled. On the moment Coogan's heart dropped to yearning tenderness, and the brake shot on suddenly.

"Eileen! Acushla! Is it crying that you are?" he broke forth, bending to-

ward her.

But Eileen withdrew her fingers, and Coogan saw the dancing of her eyes.

"No f-father," she said mockingly,

"I was laughing."

In silence the czar of Dalton descended from the car, for he had stalled the engine. In a daze he turned it over, while Eileen watched his clean-cut face, strong in the glare of the lights, and smiled, perhaps a little wistfully, at its bewilderment. For a moment he stood by the running board in thought. The engine raced, and Eileen slowed it with her finger tip. What had there been to laugh about? At least it was evident that there had not been the slightest occasion for crying. He slipped into his seat and covered his features with his favorite political mask. How was he to know that women read other things than faces?

The car moved forward slowly, and he looked neither to left nor right. The warm wind from the south, bearing the scent of spring blossoms from the fields on either side of the road, assailed his senses with gentle persistence. The incident had left him shaken from his usual self-control, and he set his teeth in a struggle to regain it.

"Do you feel so Eileen sighed. much older, then, Denny?" she asked.

Her tone was meditative.

"Forty-five has come and gone for me, Eileen," Coogan answered in somber relief.

"And you call that old?" persisted Eileen, turning a wondering look upward.

"Old enough," said Coogan. have had little to keep me young."

"'Tis time, then, that you more," said Eileen positively. should get married, Denny."

He smiled grimly. picked her out?" he asked. "Have you

"No-o," said the girl by his side. "Not exactly. But there should be many who would be glad."

"To make me young?" asked Coogan lightly. "To make me young," he

added heavily, after a pause.

Eileen caught the hopelessness of his tone, and turned full toward him in sympathy. The Honorable Dennis Coogan saw her-saw the loosened strands of her golden hair flutter in the south wind, saw the sweet curve of her chin, the temptation of her upturned lips, and in her eyes the light that the Geary boy at Midvale no doubt was waiting for. To play with one's own misery is sometimes a consolation. For an instant her eyes drowned him.

"There is only one girl in all the world, Eileen," he said tensely, "who

could make me young again." Eileen turned away swiftly. "Denny! You're in love!" she cried. "Do I know her?"

"Not so well as I'd like to," said

Coogan briefly.

Eileen's happy laugh suddenly broke on the night; it held more than mere amusement.

"Do I know her at all?" she insisted. "It might be," replied Coogan cautiously, and once more mindful of his secret, "that you've met her."

"Why have you never told me this before?" she demanded unexpectedly.

"I didn't want you to-that is," said Coogan in haste, "I don't think I ever took you out in the car at night when the apple blossoms were budding and when the warm wind-" He relapsed weakly into silence. "Hell!" he said inwardly in self-disgust at his blundering.

Eileen apparently mused. "So that is why I seem like a daughter to you. I can't say, Denny, that you are com-

plimentary.'

Coogan wiped his forehead. not much on compliments," he said. "But we'd best be moving if you want

to get to Midvale."

Driven into the last rampart of defense, he opened the throttle wide, and the gray car shot down the pike like a cannon ball. Twice Eileen essayed to speak, and twice the boss of Dalton cut out the muffler and drowned in the resultant roar obvious attempts to continue the conversation along too dan-

gerous courses.

But as they swept up the summit at Mountville and saw far below them in the distance the first lights of Midvale glimmer, Coogan slowed the car once more. It was not in flesh and blood to hasten his last ride with Eileen; to let her go from his side to the man who waited was enough without hurrying the moment. And so in silence they slid quietly down the winding hill, clutch out, and the noisy engine at rest, through leafy avenues of budding green and across rippling mountain streams. At the last curve Coogan felt the wheel grow stiff, and drew the car to the roadside.

"Trouble," he announced. And as he descended and completed his examination of the tire of a front wheel, he

added: "She's down."

"Oh, Denny!" said Eileen. "What a

shame! Shall I get out?"

Coogan frowned at the offending nail head where it projected from the shoe, while his spirit exulted within

"I could run in on it," he suggested. "And tear it to pieces?" said Eileen. "You'll do nothing of the kind. I'll

get out while you fix it."

Coogan drew aside his cushion, and she sat down upon it in a leafy bower by the roadside as he hung his coat over the wheel and rummaged for the extra tube and the tools.

"It won't take long," he said, bending

over the jack.

Eileen smiled back at him. "It's lovely here," she announced, "and you can be as long as you like."

"There's like to be another, I'm

thinking," replied Coogan grimly, "who'll not be waiting so easily."

"If I'm not worrying you don't need

to," answered Eileen softly.

Coogan's tire tool slipped suddenly from the rim socket, and scraped the skin from his knuckles. He straightened and looked at her dubiously.

"Most men would have sworn at "It only that," she observed wisely.

goes to prove what I said."

Coogan bent over the wheel without answering. The current seemed again to be swinging outward, and silence had impressed itself upon him as his only haven. Eileen sat clasping her knees, watching him and humming the song of the evening before. The side lamp framed her face in an aureole of light against a background of twisting blackberry vines melting into black velvet. As he straightened for the pump he met the scrutiny of her clear eyes.

"Rest a minute before you do that." she said. "Sit down there on the run-

ning board and talk to me."

"There's little time, Eileen," he demurred. "'Twill be fair late for us to

get in Midvale."

"Are you not my father's oldest friend?" she asked gravely. "Sit down now. I'm to know all about your love affair. Tell me now, Uncle Denny,

what she looks like."

In the protection of the shadow, Coogan let his despairing gaze drink its fill of the picture she made. Then he obeyed her command, and, pump between his knees, seated himself on the board beyond the light rays, while guile crept into his heart.

"What she looks like, Eileen?" he said. "'Tis hard to say just. hair is-black-very black. And her eyes—well, they are rather black, too."
"Yes," said Eileen. "And what

"Yes," said Eileen. else?"

'She has no dimples."

"No dimples," echoed Eileen. "How old is she?'

"About thirty-five," said Coogan positively.

"She won't seem like your daughter, will she?" commented Eileen. "What shape is her nose?"

"Pug," asseverated Coogan solemnly. "Some people are not liking pug noses, but I am. And she wears glasses, and can't sing a note," he added triumphantly, rising and applying himself with finality to the pump. "We may be married in June," he added.
"Tell me more," commanded Eileen.

But Coogan shook his head in nega-"'Tis past eleven," he said. "'Twill not do to reach there after midnight. Climb in now, little girl."

Eileen obeyed, and Coogan stowed away the kit and took his seat. As the car moved slowly forward, she sighed.

"It's so nice to know about it," she said. "And father will be so glad when I tell him."

"What's that?" said Coogan.

"I shall tell father at once," repeated "It's something he ought to know. And I know who it is now. Of course, I didn't exactly think that-but no matter. If you want her and will be happy, that is enough."

The dampness started again on Coogan's forehead. "I-I don't think I'd tell it just yet, Eileen," he said hastily.

"It's a secret."

"But not from father," she said posi-

tively.

Visions of Darragh's face floated before Coogan's eyes. "But, you see," he said, "I haven't said anything to her vet-that is-I-" His voice trailed miserably away.

Eileen turned to him. "Don't be making a mistake," she said softly. "It doesn't seem to me that you can want

her very much."

"Perhaps I don't-so very much," confessed the boss of Dalton humbly.

"Don't you think, Uncle Denny, that maybe it was just the color of her hair and of her eyes?"

"Perhaps," replied Coogan, moisten-

ing his lips.

"Or that she hadn't any dimples?" continued Eileen gravely.

Coogan faced her, defeated.
"Let be, Eileen," he said unevenly. "'Tis not like you. You know. I've tried for a year to keep it from you, but it seems I could not. The trouble is that the heart of your old Uncle Denny has stayed too young in the sight of you. You know; and now do you try to forget."

"Old Uncle Denny," said the girl

softly, "what do I know?"

"Must you have your woman's drop of a man's heart's blood, then?" cried Coogan, "Well-take it. You know that I love you. You know that life means nothing to me without you. You know that I'd lie on the road and let this car roll over me a hundred times if the hundredth would make you happy. You are what I have never had and never will have in my life—love." "Oh!" breathed Eileen. "Denny!"

Coogan laid his hand over hers. "Child," he said gently, "sometimes in my dreamings I have thought of doing just this. Sometimes I have thought of what life could be if you were at the door when I came home-if your arms should reach up to me. And those have been the hard times, dear. Belike it is as well for me to end it by telling you."

"To end it," said Eileen.

"See where we have stopped," said Coogan. "There stands the first light of Midvale. At the other end of the street he will be waiting. Come, I'll take you to him, as I said I would."

"Take me to whom, Denny?" asked

Eileen.

"To the younger and luckier man," answered Coogan. "To the Geary

Eileen smiled up at him through tears. "But, Denny," she said, "can you not be a little complimentary even on the occasion of my engagement?"

"Have I said anything wrong, Eileen?" said Coogan wearily, "Perhaps I don't know yet just what I am saying."

"I sent the Geary boy away last

night," said Eileen simply. Coogan stared stupidly. "I don't understand," he said. "I-isn't the Geary boy here waiting for you to marry him?"

"No," whispered Eileen.

"Isn't anybody?" demanded Coogan. No answer came, and in the pause the czar of the country groped for light. It came, filtering slowly through the fog of the evening's swift events.

"Isn't anybody?" he demanded, once

more a man.

"I-I don't exactly know," said Eileen at last, half in laughter and half in tears.

Coogan gently drew her hands from her hot face and gathered them close to his heart. They were such little hands.

"Thank God," he said, very reverently, "I do."





THE ASKING LADY ALICE PRESCOTT SMITH



ERHAPS the only remarkable thing about Anne Ellery was that when she wanted to know anything about any one, she asked. She didn't

finesse, she didn't explore, she didn't consult a mutual friend, she didn't draw deductions; she went to the person in question and asked. The habit marked her; it gave her an air of originality that nothing else about her quite justified. She asked policemen the time of day—for her watch was entirely feminine—she asked women where they bought their hats, and men where they sold their bank shares; and when Arnold Hillyer asked her to marry him, she asked him, in turn, if it were true that he had loved her cousin, Lilian Gordon.

In person, this disturber of the public routine was slender and tall, with the gently flowing lines of the eighteenhundred-and-thirty period, when femininity was, theoretically, all docility and dumbness. Her voice-even when she was using it to the wreckage of one's secrets and self-esteem-was low, with a reedy cadence that gave her an air of sweet helplessness, so that men, hearing it, offered her their seats in crowded cars. Her face was long, olive tinted, and chaste of modeling, the pale, tender face of poesy, with delicate half moons of brows. She was one-toned, a harmony of line and expression—that is, until she opened her eyes. Then one sat up with a sharp intake of the breath.

For her eyes were gray blue, crinkly, roguish. They were absurdly out of place. It was as if a careless artisan had fashioned a mask of tragedy and slipped in the eyes of a soubrette. Some, who had no cause to like Anne, declared that the eyes were the only index of the woman. That she was a changeling, usurping the wrong body, and peering mockingly from the peepholes. But most people liked her. Even her habit of clearing all underbrush from her path, and arriving at an object, left people happy, even if somewhat breathless. For, whatever she did, her voice was incredibly wooing.

When she asked Arnold Hillyer whether he loved, or had loved, Mrs. Gordon, she took her usual leap over fences among things one must not say. For Lilian Gordon was married to Anne's cousin and had been for many years. For two years back there had been some talk about herself and Hillyer. Not much talk and not definite. Whatever Anne had in mind, she had argued more from the gathering lines about Hillyer's eyes than from what she had heard.

A man who has just asked a woman to marry him finds it a long road to travel from his own emotion to a question like that. Hillyer made the transition in a jerk, and arrived demoralized. His face grew sallow, which meant that he was putting guards on his anger. He did not reply.

"I am waiting," persisted the eyes.

Hillyer grew rigid as a paralytic. "I shall not answer that," he said. "You wish me to infer a 'yes'?"

"Infer what you will. I shall cer-

tainly not say 'no.' "

What more Hillyer might have said, or protested, perhaps not even he himself will ever know. For thereon Anne proved that people who judged her by her eves were wrong. Her question had been flat-footed enough for a coal heaver, but she took his answer in a way quite in keeping with her early Victorian shoulders. She gave him a look, whether of love, or wrath, or disappointment, he could not tell, and walked out of the room. She also walked out of his life. She would not see him, she would not hear from him, she would say nothing on her own part. She would open neither lips nor ears.

Now, the world knew nothing of all this, so if Anne wasted any energy in what is known among women as holding up her head, there was none to remark. What the world did remark was her new devotion to her cousin, Mrs. Gordon, and the extraordinary vigor of her own pleasures. She was merciless in the way she packed her life. It was not in accord with her air of gentle incapacity and crinoline. She moved without flurry, but with twentieth-century steam behind her.

And Hillyer was not idle. However divergent their ways, both he and Anne proved, at this time, that they had something in common. For they took the break between them in the same fashion. Hillyer went in for stocks, and Anne for an automobile. It was practically the same outlet: both sports furnished breathlessness and absorption, and enough danger to keep the wits from straying. They played their separate games with dash, but without disaster. Anne was saved from too demoralizing speed by her brother. Hillyer had no brother to act as brake, but his thick, square hands showed Saxon blood. So he escaped excesses.

Anne and her brother shared the same roof. They were all that were

left of the family, and they lived together in great unity and almost complete separation, each going as fancy The brother was silent, capable, hard to read. He cared so much for Anne that he had not thought of marriage for himself. Though, as with other men who love a woman, it did not occur to him to spend much time with her. At intervals he urged her to marry, doing it in a half-hearted way that showed him to be the elder, and to have a sense of duty. Among the possible men in Anne's circle, he showed his favor to a Mr. Sinclair. Of Hillver he said nothing, though at one time he had thought a great deal.

Now, San Francisco is large or small, according to one's own tapeline. But, by any standard, it is large enough for a good game of hide and seek, and for a year Anne and Hillyer contrived not to meet. Twelve months is long enough to bring most troubled waters to settlement, and the quiet brother, watching Anne, put Hillyer out of his thought. The girl was light-stepping as any young thing, conscious of power, and fretting for the future. Her brother had a theory that the foot

drags with the heart.

The inevitable meeting between Anne and Hillyer took place at last on a San Francisco ferry, one Saturday morning in June. Anne and her brother were bound on a week-end trip through the mountains. They had two machines. The brother was in a runabout with Mr. Sinclair, to whose suit he was at the moment giving conscientious shoves. Anne had her own five-passenger car. She had the cousin, Lilian Gordon, and her husband in the tonneau, with an indefinite and nonconducting aunt in between. Anne herself took the front seat beside the chauffeur.

Now, Anne's machine was a toy on which she spent thought and pocket-book. It was not for size or speed that she ranked it, but for convenience. She planned it as the first tailor must have devised the pockets in a man's clothes. She spent hours inventing wants, then arranged receptacles for

She built projecting turrets around the tonneau, overhanging the mud guards, and could carry anything from a thermos bottle to an axe. The car was low-running, without much clearance. When Anne named it the Cocker Spaniel, her friends looked at the shaggy protuberances on its sides. and at its nosing gait, and nodded un-

derstandingly.

Four machines are allowed on each ferry, and when Anne and her brother arrived at a breathless last minute, they were ranged in beside two cars that had preceded them. The moment that they were in place, the gangplank was clattered up behind them, and the ropes thrown off. They congratulated themselves on having snatched that last moment of speed, took a long breath, and began to look around.

Anne stood in the front seat, and took stock of the cars beside her. She was smiling, for the freshness of the day exhilarated her. She had a new trip ahead, and her car was working well, so her smile flowed over on to Mr. Sinclair, as he left the runabout

and came over to her side.

But it was not Mr. Sinclair who held her attention. It was the other car that was packed in beside her. It was a runabout of the same make as her brother's, a replica of his machine, except that the stranger's car had the top raised. But in front, between the clock and the speedometer, was a box that she could not classify; a box that the Cocker Spaniel lacked. Anne eyed it as a collector looks at old china. She wasted no time. The man who apparently owned the machine was standing with his back to her. She addressed herself to his well-set shoulders.

"I beg your pardon. Will you tell me the use of that box on the front of

your machine?"

The man turned, showing a freshcolored young face. He was smiling, for the voice had won him. Now, at sight of the long pongee-wrapped figure, and the smooth-skinned face looking out from the dust veils, he was

"I can't tell you anything about it,"

he lamented. "It's my friend's machine. I'm only ballast. He'll explain it. Oh, Hillyer, will you step here?'

And so it happened. Hillyer came out from behind the runabout, and made his grave bow to the company. He came with the disconcerting abruptness of the genie in the box, or the cuckoo in the clock, or of any of the other mechanical instruments of fate, that sit bottled awaiting their cue. It was evident to Anne that he had been crouching his six feet of leg and shoulder into a bow, in order to keep out of sight of them all. And now she had summoned him.

He saluted his acquaintances briefly, was presented to Sinclair, and named his own friend in turn. It was all formal, indifferent. well carried through. Then he stepped over to

Anne, and his color rose.

"You were asking?" he said. Anne looked up at him; looked at him squarely and courageously, and saw what changes the year had made. She cleared her throat before she could

speak.

"I was interested in that box on the front of your machine," she said. "Is it one of those self-cranking devices?"

Now, Anne's courage was of the spasmodic sort, so that, when she determined to face a thing, she ran out of doors and around the corner to Therefore, having once brought her gaze up to Hillyer's, she continued to look at him. And so she saw his face change. A ripple ran over it. It was not a smile; it was almost a contortion. When she asked what was in the box, he unmistakably shut his jaw hard to keep his muscles in order, and not laugh.

For a moment Anne saw things unsteadily. She had thought that Hillyer's eyes welcomed her, claimed her, were glad of her, in spite of the yearin spite of everything. Yet here, within a moment of their meeting, something within him could move him to

amusement.

But Hillyer was answering smoothly. He stepped around, and looked at his car as if it were new to him.

"You were asking about this?" He laid his hand on the box, and, though Anne did not see it, he swallowed hard once more. "No, that has nothing to do with the cranking. It's a device of my own. It hasn't worked as yet. But I've hopes of it. I'll be glad to explain

it to you some day."

Now, that was an unsatisfactory and sibylic answer to a commonplace question, and everybody felt that Hillyer had been embarrassed or rude, and they immediately began to talk, that he might run to cover. Sinclair talked. Mrs. Gordon talked, the aunt put in a vague murmur. But Anne said nothing. She was realizing that Lilian Gordon was sitting there in the tonneau. So what she had seen in Hillyer's eyes had been for Lilian, and the ridicule had been for her. She stood very straight and quiet, and listened fixedly to Mr. Sinclair. Hillyer murmured an excuse, and walked away. All laughter had left him. He looked dispirited. Even Anne's brother saw it.

The ferryboat-she was bound for Sausalito-made her way through blue water in a freshening breeze. A fog was hanging outside the heads, waiting to come in with the noonday. There was that to talk about, that and the gulls and the islands and the roads ahead and the best place to take lunch. So the twenty-five minutes of crossing were covered in safety, and Hillyer's absence went without remark. Then Sausalito, hanging from mid-air like a drop curtain, was reached, and Anne went into the cabin to retie her veils. When she came out, the passengers had scattered, and Hillyer's runabout was crossing the gangplank. He turned from his levers to give her a sidelong bow.

Anne sent Mr. Sinclair back to her brother, climbed into the Cocker Spaniel, and they were off. Once free of the ferry, Hillyer's machine, which had the lead, lengthened the distance between them with every rod. The rear machines lost all sight of him before they had gone ten miles. He went with the throttle full open, and, looking at the ruts in the road they were traveling, Anne's brother grimaced to himself, and hoped that Hillyer's friend

had a good spin.

Anne's party was bound for Manzanita Springs, a long day's run, and they all settled back with the sweet lethargy that comes of hours ahead. with no concern but to keep muscles comfortable and minds drowsed. The brother's machine led, and the Spaniel rocked comfortably behind, with just space between to keep free of the dust.

They stopped for lunch at a roadside place, wiped the dust from their eyes, and furbished up their wits to the point of being equal to some small chatter while they ate. All but Mr. Gordon. He had been as silent as the rest during the morning, and now he seemed moody. He was a large, whiteskinned, nervous man, of irritable temper and minute knowledge. In private life he was ineffective, in business a power. Despite his size, he was accustomed to sputter like an annoyed hen. That was his usual mood, and his safest. Even Anne, who, as his cousin, took liberties with him, dreaded him in his silent times. They were his storage periods, and no one knew what might result. Through all her dull ache and dreariness, Anne wondered now what had gone wrong.

After luncheon, the road went mountainward. Anne took the wheel for a time. She had outwitted care before by focusing her mind on cheating her engine into taking a grade on high speed when its horse power didn't justify it. But she could not keep her thought upon her levers. After an hour of it she gave up her seat to the

chauffeur.

Hillyer's face was printed on trees and roadside; Hillyer's face, with a smile. It was the smile that was beating her down. And she was not in the least caring now, whether that smile had been at her expense or not. The trouble was that she knew that smile so well, every line and crinkle of it, and that she had not seen it in so long.

The machine buzzed regularly, the roads were reasonably good, and the hours slumbered on. The two machines kept as regularly apart as if a towline were between. They pulled up over a spur of the coast range. dropped into a hot, fertile valley, where they traveled for a time, and then began climbing once more. Late afternoon came, and the road grew steeper and rougher. Lilian Gordon roused, and talked over Anne's shoulder.

She did not talk of Hillyer, though the consciousness of him was behind her voice, and showed in the strain in her tones when she spoke of the possibility of Anne's marrying Mr. Sinclair. Anne listened, and winced at the undertow of the talk. She took the wheel again as an excuse for silence.

The engine was making heavy grades, and had taken to singing. It fitted itself to Anne's thoughts in a chant. "Better something than nothing," it droned. "You demanded the entire loaf. Now you've not even crumbs. Compromise, and take what you can. No one is entitled to an unflawed joy: it would spoil the equilib-Every sad old saw born of human futility and heartache sung itself to the pump of the engine. Anne gripped the wheel. "It is not true," she defied. "Better nothing than a counterfeit," and she almost said it aloud. She pushed the Spaniel up to the other car.

"I'll go by you," she told her brother.

"I want to go faster."

Her brother checked his machine. "No, I'm going to try a crosscut through Deer Valley. I've done it. We won't get in short of midnight if we don't. Keep behind, and don't lose sight of me, for it's a hard road to find." He looked at her critically. "Your water's boiling. Why do you want to go fast? Better let Murphy drive.'

But Anne kept the wheel, and went Not so fast, however. Her brother's look had been of the family variety-the family clear-headedness that ignores subterfuges, and lays bare foibles. "Other things are boiling besides your water," it had said in effect. So she went more slowly, and kept out of range of her brother's eyes.

Sunset came, then afterglow; the road twisted into cañon ends where it was black under the laurels.

"We'll light the lamps," Anne de-

cided.

The stop for lighting took time, through a combination of stupidities. Murphy was grumpy at being refused the wheel, and would not hurry. Mr. Gordon lost his spectacles in the ton-The runabout was long out of sight when they started on, and Anne told Murphy to keep the horn sounding while she put the Spaniel to its best pace in pursuit.

The road was single-tracked and unfrequented, and it was startling to sweep suddenly into a crossroad settlement. It was a side crest of the divide, and three canons came in, and four roads with them. There were two roads from the north, two from the Which to take? Anne hesisouth.

tated.

"We might ask if any one had seen the runabout."

Murphy puffed impatiently.

"We're losing time. There are the tracks." He pointed to where a fresh furrow lay in the dust on the right. Anne turned that way.
"Yet it's a risk," she demurred. "It

might be the wrong machine."

But her anxiety was short. minutes of forced running showed a runabout ahead with two men in it. Anne slowed her engine, and took her old distance.

An hour passed; an hour of nervous running. Dark came, and the roads were bad. The Spaniel plowed through dust, so that the rear light of the machine ahead was only a shifting blur. They passed no houses, and night noises obtruded themselves over the growl of the machine. The blazing headlight exaggerated everything. Trees rushed into its glare, and out again; the greens were too dazzling; the shadows too black. It was unreal, Gargantuan. Anne drove moodily,

And the road went on and on. dust grew thicker, and the blackness more choking. The aunt in the tonneau cried quietly, Mr. Gordon was

heavily silent, and Lilian screamed monotonously as the machine lurched in the dust of the curves. But the machine ahead plowed forward, forward, forward. And it increased its speed. It was malevolent the way it kept vanishing in front of them, so that they had to sit at tension to keep it in sight. The engine had stopped reciting platitudes to Anne, and now it pumped but one refrain: "Cannot stop. Cannot stop."

The lane of trees widened, and the dust under the wheels grew more cushiony, as if animals had tramped it. They saw the lights of a house. Lilian Gordon sobbed, and Murphy swore softly. The machine ahead swerved to the right, through open bars, and the Spaniel followed. The lights of the house were still some distance ahead, and Anne let her machine take steam and crowd the runabout. So she nearly smashed her lanterns when the smaller machine stopped suddenly, with a grind of the brakes. The man in the driver's seat jumped out.

"Who are you?" he demanded.
"What the devil are you following me for?" He stepped into the light. It

was Hillyer.

For a moment everybody stared. Hillyer put his hand to his head.

"You followed me!" he said uncer-

tainly.

"Do you think it was intentional, you fool?" Gordon bellowed, and even the aunt raised a protesting murmur. But Anne dropped her head on the wheel. She did not speak.

Hillyer was coming to himself. He

looked at but one figure.

"I see," he said. "You followed the wrong machine, Miss Ellery?"

Anne had to raise her head. Her face was haggard and dust covered.

"Yes," she said. "Where are we

Hillyer looked away from her. He had back his old expression, which was noncommittal.

"You're nowhere," he answered absently. "At a hole in the ground; my ranch. You were going—""

"To Manzanita Springs."

"Five miles across country; four times that by road. You'll stay here for the night."

"I must reach my brother, or get word to him in some way. There's no

telephone?

"Then don't you think we should go

on, and find my brother?"

The question was flung straight at Hillyer. He looked up at Anne, and instantly looked away. He debated a moment, then went to Mr. Gordon.

"Can you all go on?" he asked. "Can

you stand it?"

"Of course," Lilian answered, and the aunt nodded. Mr. Gordon shrugged. He would not admit that his wife could outdo him in endurance. She knew that.

Hillyer went back to Anne.

"Then we'll go on," he said, with his foot on the step. "You're right about your brother. He'd have a hideous time. I'll drive."

"But you're not coming!"

"I'm going to drive you. Otherwise you're not to go."

"But there's no room."

"Leave your man here. He can follow with the runabout in the morning."

"Is that the only way?"

"Yes. I'd have your man follow to-night, but my lights wouldn't hold. My gas is nearly out, my oil, too. How about yours?"

"I have an extra tank. All my lamps

connect with the gas."

Hillyer mounted the second step. "Then we're ready. Change seats with me, please."

But Anne stood still. "Why couldn't

you tell me the way?"

"I would not." His tone roughened.
"You drove like a maniac coming up here."

"And you?"

"Oh, I—" He waved her aside. "Come, please, we're wasting time. Crank the machine, Murphy."

In five minutes arrangements were made, and they were on the road again. They plunged back into the twisting tunnel of light, with the darkness crowding them. Hillyer drove carefully, and made no attempt at talk. Anne sat beside him, and was also silent. Yet she spoke at last.

"You're driving very slowly."
"I do not feel in haste," he said.

And again there was silence for a half hour, and they had only dust and thoughts to chew upon.

Hillyer spoke suddenly.

"And through it all I was trying to break the necks of those people who were following me."

"Why?"
"I thought that I had cause to feel

like murder," he said.

The band of light before them became uncertain. The greens grew less arsenic, the shadows grayer. Anne noticed it first.

"Our lights are going out," she said. Hillyer stopped the machine, and jumped out.

"You're right. Where is the other tank?"

"Under the tonneau seat. The tools are in the second box on your side."

"And the key?"
There was no answer. The lights went lower, and Hillyer raised his voice.

"Will you let me have the key?"

Anne gave an hysterical giggle, most unlike her in sound.

"The key?" she murmured slowly.
"The key?" She stood up. "Why,
where should the key be? I am a
woman. The key is in Murphy's
pocket."

The aunt laughed. The sound was as unexpected as Anne's giggle had been. Hillyer made a smothered sound, and bent over the tool box. Lilian Gordon stretched out a hand.

"Don't worry, Anne," she said. "I don't mind."

Hillyer suddenly straightened him-

"I don't mind, either," he echoed. His voice was unsafe from laughter, and Anne knew it.

She addressed herself to him sternly, and tried to keep apology out of her tones. "Will we have to stay here the rest of the night?" she asked.

"But there's not much left of the

night," Hillyer amended.

The lamps died, and a straggling moon came over the trees. It gave Hillyer light enough to move the machine on to where the road widened. He ran the *Spaniel* to one side, and stopped it on a rise of ground where the timber was thin.

"We can lie down under the oaks," he said. "It will be better than sitting cramped in these seats the rest of the night." And he took robes and cushions, and spread them under the trees.

Lilian Gordon climbed from the tonneau, and her husband and the aunt followed. But Anne kept her seat.

"I'll stay by my boxes," she said pettishly.

The group on the rugs stretched themselves furtively, and said little. At last Lilian Gordon turned to Hillver.

"I'm so thirsty it's cruelty. Didn't we pass a watering trough at the last turn?"

Hillyer jumped to his feet.

"We'll go and see."

The pair disappeared in a moment. The air seemed suddenly overcharged, explosive. The aunt murmured that, after all, it was a fine night, and began to plait her handkerchief. Mr. Gordon rose, and paced the road in circles. Anne remembered that he had practically not spoken all day, and that his sullen temper was cruel as a wolf's. She could not keep her hand steady, as it rested on the wheel. She knew that she was cold, and that the moon was ghastly.

The moon was blurred by a fog wisp, as Mrs. Gordon and Hillyer came walking back. The turn with the watering trough must have been near, for they had been gone but a few moments. They walked slowly, and Mrs. Gordon was talking. Every movement showed their preoccupation with themselves. The world was sad and shadowy with the pale moonlight and the promise of dawn, and their dark figures looked set apart and lonely.

Mr. Gordon stopped measuring circles, and waited for them. His large, soft-muscled face was chalk white under its streaking of dust. He spoke to his wife first.

"Leave us, Lilian. I've business with this man."

His tone to his wife was courteous, but when he turned to Hillver it was as insulting as it is given man to devise. He accused Hillyer of designs upon his wife, and he cited instances. He went back to the meeting on the boat in the morning, and he made vivid and unafraid statements of what he had seen in Hillyer's face at that time. All the speech that he had stored during the day came out now, compressed to acid. He talked well always; now his denunciation would have convinced any one. It convinced himself, so that he shook as he talked. There was a specious calm about his words; they were picked with such terrible accuracy.

Hillyer said nothing. There was no pause for him to speak, and he made no effort to force an opportunity. Lilian clung to her husband's arm, begging and crying in the futile way of women. No one noticed Anne. left her seat, and cranked the machine.

She went back to her seat, and let the engine gather power, so that it sang like a great hornet. She took off her brake, and grasped her speed lever. Then she looked behind. Hillver was standing, his arms close to his sides, as still as a crouching cat. Gordon was nearing the end of his outburst, for he was beginning with, "We will hear what you have to say-" jammed her lever into place, and the machine jerked and started forward. She gave a scream.

"Arnold!" she cried. "Help me! Help me! I can't stop it! Jump!"

A well-trained man obeys a sharp command by instinct. Then, too, a woman's cry stops all reasoning. Hillver plunged forward, and jumped. He caught the step, steadied himself by one of the boxes, and scrambled over into the tonneau. He threw himself forward, and grasped for the brake.

But Anne was before him, and fended off his arm. The Spaniel was under full steam now, and going downhill at a galloping pace. A turn was before Anne rounded it with the width of a tire between wheel and cañon rim. A steep plunge was be-fore her. She took it as if she were on a toboggan.

Hillyer laughed; a queer, choked bark of defiance and something else. He jumped into the seat beside Anne. pushed her aside, and secured the foot brake. Then he switched off the en-gine. The Spaniel was at the bottom of the grade, and glad to stop. It settled down in a hollow with a comfortable thump.

Hillyer faced Anne. He was angry. "How you messed things!" he

groaned.

Anne drew back in her seat.

"He would have shot you." She was shaking. "He carries a revolver. You didn't know that."

"So that was why you kidnapped

"Any one would have done the same thing.

Hillyer laughed impatiently.

"Oh, don't think I misunderstand. I'm not so vain as that. I know your impulses too well. It meant nothing personal. But, oh, if you hadn't done it !"

Anne shivered.

"You wanted to stay, and have it out! But Lilian loves her husband. I've watched. I'm sorry to have to tell you, but she does."

Hillyer stopped a moment, and

looked at Anne.

"So you've thought it worth while to watch." His tone was quieter. "Yes, I know that Mrs. Gordon loves her husband. So much the more reason that I should be there now.'

"But when you told Mr. Gordon that vou loved Lilian-or had

"I should not have told him so."

"He would have asked you."

"I was hoping for that. I wanted you to hear what I had to say."

"But you told me---

Hillyer took off his cap, and pushed back his hair. He bent his head, and laid his grimed cheek on Anne's gloved hand where it rested on the wheel.

"Listen," he said, and his voice was thick. "Anne, you should have found out by this time that if you hurl direct questions at people you are apt to get lies in return. It's an instinct. Let me talk to you a moment about that day."

"But you said-"

"I lied. Lied automatically. I don't know why. I was angry, for you had asked me something you had no right to say. I never understood myself. For there had been nothing—nothing. I had liked Mrs. Gordon—but had stopped in time. And I—I cared for you, Anne, with my whole heart."

They sat silent for a moment, and the man did not raise his head.

"Anne," he said at last.

"Yes."

"Anne, I've had a bad time this year. But you—I've watched you, and your eyes have been gay. Even this morning on the boat, when you were talking to that man, why your eyes—— But to-night, when you came on me unexpectedly, they were different. I haven't dared look at you since, for I've been half out of my mind with hope. Anne."

"Yes."

He laid his hand on hers in a way they both remembered.

"What is a man to believe of a woman?" he said hoarsely. "Tell me that, Anne."

And then Anne sobbed.

"Never her eyes," she cried. "If

she has any pluck and spirit in her, never believe in her eyes."

It was the middle of the next day before Anne remembered. "Oh, by the way," she said, "what is in that box on your machine?"

Hillyer looked down at her. They were safe housed behind trees at Manzanita Springs, with a reluctant, but subjugated, brother at one porte, and a fluttering aunt at the other. He continued to look at her.

"There is nothing in that box," he drawled at last.

"Nothing!"

"Absolutely nothing. I was tempted to put—well, a bit of a flower I carried —but I didn't."

"But, Arnold-"

"See here," he said. "I knew about your boxes. I knew about the Cocker Spaniel. I knew if we met—and we were bound to meet—that you'd ask me what was in that box. I knew you couldn't help it. And it would give an opening. But I didn't think you'd do it with just that audience, or on the boat."

Anne's eyes filled.

"You were laughing at me-even then."

But Hillyer snatched her to him.

"Let me laugh at you. Let me love you well enough to laugh at you, and know you, foibles and all, and have you. And have you, Anne, have you. Oh, but I nearly missed you!"

Anne's voice was very soft.

"Shall I always leave one key in Murphy's pocket?" she asked.







HE casual happening in of three old friends of Andrew Morton's, for a game of bridge, one afternoon in early spring, established a prece-

dent which offered by autumn a fixed custom. His friends continued to drop in on Andrew in the library of his rather ornate mansion, in the exclusive upper regions of the City of New-made Fortunes, for a rubber or two nearly

every afternoon.

So simple and natural an arrangement need not have caused the slightest mental disturbance to any one had not Andrew been brought, at the same time, to an awakened sense of responsibility in regard to the future of his daughter. Sarah—at least he intimated that he had convictions on the subject of parental responsibility at about this same time; and Sarah, being made aware of this, conceived a fear that he meant to coerce her in some medieval fashion, or control her destiny in some un-American fashion, the while he considered her a helpless pasteboard in life's game of bridge. Consequently, she showed a pronounced aversion for those poor, innocent toys with which idlers tempt lagging time to fly, and her father's associates became to her arch enemies. These three old cronies, she assured her friend, Mrs. Morrell, could only fittingly be described as that age-old trinity, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.

"And I am sure," wailed Sarah, "that father intends me to marry 'the World'—simpering old beau—and I detest

him."

Such an arrangement, even in prospect, seemed a tremendous pity since Sarah's father, as Gwynne Morrell opulently phrased it, was rolling in money, and her own half brother, Morris Ramsay, just the right age for Sarah, was so moderately endowed that he was next door to being poor; and Morris was such a fine young chap, with ambitions and all that, and, besides being splendidly educated, he worked hard at his profession and knew things about mines and metals that made him astoundingly learned; and "the World," luridly described by Sarah and her tears, could be looked upon only as a plain fortune hunter, a gambler for Andrew Morton's money, since he had nothing of his own to speak of.

Taking advantage, then, of those feminine devices ever ready at hand for the alert and industrious who have respect for opportunity, Mrs. Morrell set to work to manipulate the situation as delicately as possible, with the result that before the summer had passed, Morris Ramsay was reading Shelley to Sarah on the porch of Mrs. Morrell's farmhouse down on Long Island, and Andrew Morton was apparently blissfully unconscious of the circumstance.

This latter may account for the fact that Andrew, small, keen, iron gray as to hair, eyes, and general appearance, and forty-five years old, sat at his writing table one afternoon in early autumn, after Sarah's return from her visit to Mrs. Morrell, eying her, as she sat opposite him, with extreme but well-concealed curiosity. Her very pres-

ence breathed a mulish incapacity for appreciating the tickling whip of persuasion or parental argument, for Andrew had been arguing, a diversion dear to his heart; and he had had the temerity to believe that he could use his

arts against a woman.

Now, Andrew knew men and affairs, being a capitalist, a self-constructed man after a pattern of his own making, on an original design of section boss of a railway line; and, being an American with a strong strain of Irish blood in him, his evolution had been truly and characteristically rapid, and he had gathered by the way a working knowledge of most branches of human endeavor—art, the sciences, literature, besides possessing a peculiar and individual capacity for keeping his mouth shut when it was folly to be wise.

He had not, hitherto, included in his summary of the ingredients of social polish a profound knowledge of the feminine temperament; a fact that he was inwardly lamenting at the present time, as casting about in his mind for the formula to be used with men under similar circumstances, he felt a weakkneed recognition of its utter inadequacy; nevertheless, he possessed intuition and imagination, faculties that had served him well in life, and, as he humbly, if humorously, assured himself, there was nothing in the book of knowledge that man could not acquire and assimilate, Andrew set himself to the task of doing so with that ardor which ever animated him in the pursuit of gain of any kind.

It was at the time of the death of Andrew's wife, who, finding the struggle with life and Andrew's ambitions too much for her, ingloriously slipped out of them at the birth of Sarah, that he had given his daughter over to a grim elderly sister of his own whose evolutionary progress in social rising lacked the spur of desire that urged him; and he had ordered that his daughter be "well brought up," never realizing, as he dismissed the responsibility from his mind, that his sister's interpretation of the term and his own

might be divergent.

Sarah had accomplished the tasks of learning with commendable skill if no brilliance: but instead of being divinely tall, a model of beauty and grace, she was small, almost insignificant looking; withal, as he comforted himself, "a tidy figure." She was, or would be at his age, as iron gray as himself, and she had a sweetly generous mouth that could flash into rarely beautiful and wonderful curves of laughter, a mouth that knew how to close obstinately, as he observed now; but she was not a princess in the fairy tale of splendor. and dash, and comet-like radiance which, in some vague dreaming, Andrew had fancied was to enwrap herself and him as in a garment "mystic, wonderful," when she should appear before him as a finished product of young womanhood.

However, she was his daughter, and as such possessed value in his eyes and in his mind which was largely generous in intention, and as she sat opposite him now, gazing at him with steady, level eyes, as comprehensive as his own, with the armor of a will, which he involuntarily admired, turned against him, he decided that she was worth measuring swords with, after all, and he scanned her as carefully and guardedly as he would have a masculine opponent in any contest, and his spirits

rose to a combat with her.

"I have no intention of marrying any man at present, certainly not one who is after your money, or who will set me up in society, vulgarly speaking," she assured him, with candor. "I don't see why you want me to cultivate society; I hate it all—the make-believe, the waste of time, of energy, the feverish strain"-the words were flung at him with purpose, and determination, and revolt-"and I like farming. going to be a farmer. There is a little patch of ground"-ah, the sweet color rising now with lovely furtive flashes in Sarah's cheeks, the gleaming light that was shining in her eyes like rippling water in the sunlight, the dreams that seemed to wreathe themselves about her head as she gazed at some far horizon of thought where alluring

pictures were revealed to her vision— "down on Long Island—next to Mrs. Morrell's." The voice sank a little lower; in it was a lyric note as if her heart were singing a song of its own. "And I'd like to live there and make it pay, as Mrs. Morrell makes her farm pay. I know that I could."

Sarah's cheeks were aflame, her tone full of self-reliance, of eager straining for that effort which is the hand-

maiden of achievement.

Andrew surveyed his daughter with He had been discrimination. studying her, absorbing her point of view as he drew her out, appreciating her as a woman, not solely as his daughter, with that intuitive and quick grasp of character which amounted to genius with him, and he smiled a deep, inward smile of satisfaction. Ruler and judge of men, buffeting his own way to desires that allured and tempted him, he appreciated his daughter, but, as he assured himself, he was only an explorer in the devious ways of womankind. He pushed back his chair from the table with care, extreme care, watching the little streak that it made with its rubbered tips over the polished floor, threw one leg over the other one, and deliberately looked at his daughter without any telltale emotion in his face:

"And so you've decided not to marry until you're ready, and in your own time. Now"—Andrew smiled his own charming, fascinating, curiosity-tempting smile—"now I had picked out a man for you, a man after my own heart, a man any woman might be proud to marry, and I thought you would see these matters as I do; but—if you're not intending to marry now, I'll put my wishes aside; and"—he smiled again—"we'll cut out the farm, just to balance matters, my dear."

Though Andrew spoke gently, almost caressingly, the voice of the master of his own household whispered

through his tones.

Sarah rose and walked to the window, her back turned to him, absolutely void of expression; while a vision of the man Andrew had picked out for his

daughter, as a choice worthy of any woman, rose to confront him. Handsome, companionable, a gracious master of social arts, of good old family if not much money—what more could any woman desire? Yet, with shrewd canniness, Andrew withheld the subject from further discussion, refusing to disclose the personality to a young woman so stubbornly bent on walking in her own way.

"You spoke of Mrs. Morrell," he observed mildly, yet with incurious interest, addressing Sarah's mulishly expressionless back, "I believe I have

never met her."

Andrew knew all about Mrs. Morrell, and that she had taken a fancy to Sarah, on her homeward journey from a foreign school, and had tucked the girl under her social wing; and was her name not written large upon the chronicles of the socially elect? Moreover, on the occasions when Morton had put himself in the way of keen observation of this friend of his daughter, he had concluded that Gwynne Morrell was a woman after his own heart. She was tall, gay, light-hearted, if a trifle self-sufficient and imperious, but she had the suggestion of force and executive ability, and he had cherished a hope that Sarah might imbibe from her an appreciation of what was expected from her as her father's daughter; but apparently Sarah had only taken color from the soil of the Long Island farm. A widow of about thirty-six, with a sufficient income to permit her to do as she pleased, Gwynne Morrell pleased to play at farming, and very successfully.

Sarah turned quickly from the window, where through the gathering dusk she had been gazing at her far

horizon of dreams.

"Mrs. Morrell?" she questioned surprisedly. "Why, you know Mrs. Morrell—every one knows her; and Mrs. Morrell— Well, she is the only person—that is"—Sarah caught herself, and blushed as if she had not spoken quite truthfully—"the only person but one that I have ever met, who is fond of society and knows how to behave toward

it, how to treat its vagaries. She isn't afraid, as I am, of its huge grinding machinery, its wheels within wheels, its cogs that need constant watching and oiling. She and She just lives as she pleases, starts the machinery going, drops a bit of oil in here and there, and then runs off, if she wants to, and lets it take care of itself, and it does. But you and I"-Sarah turned contemplatively shrewd eyes upon her father-"neither you nor I could do that, you know. We'd have to play stoker all the time."

Andrew's gleaming eyes twinkled. "You bet we would." He laughed outright. "That is, for a while." Then he leaned over confidentially toward his daughter. "But, Sarah," whim-sically, boyishly, "I think I'd like the There's nothing so much worth while as a study of both men and women, to my mind, unless it's business or politics; and I hate politics, and I've got my business machinery to the same point that Mrs. Morrell has her social machine. I don't have to play stoker any longer; and I'm going to find the joy of my life in making myself master of that other machine-the social one, and I'm in for no job of stoker, my dear. I'll be director of the plant, manager of its output, same as Mrs. Morrell with hers"-he nodded his head convincingly, whimsically-"and I'd like your assistance at it. I want you to marry, my dear, and to marry a man of quality; a man after my own heart, a man that I can call a son-inlaw with pride."

Andrew leaned forward and picked up a pen that was lying on the table in front of him, and, fixing his eyes upon it rather than upon Sarah, said:

"If you are interested in any one down on Long Island, I may as well tell you that I am looking higher than a Andrew hesitated, and then laughingly added: "A mud digger."

And at her earnest effort to protest and explain, he held up his hand to forestall any words from her, continuing with that laughing, whimsical allusion to self that he chose to employ now and then: "I was something of a mud digger myself when I was young, and"—he lifted his eyes, sparkling now with stilletto-like ridicule—"it's no fun; and you can imagine that I have no desire to see a member of my family going back to the blanket, making a reversion to type, as it were. It's different, as you say, with your friend, Mrs. Morrell; and, by the way, suppose you ask her in to dine with us some night before long; I should like to talk over —farming and other things.

Sarah lifted her eyes, which had been downcast, and looked at her father inquiringly. Why was he so interested in

Gwynne Morrell?

"She'll bring Morris Ramsay with her," she remarked.

"Morris Ramsay?" The question was breathed in astonishment.

"Her half brother. He goes about with her a great deal-when he has

The color was flaming over Sarah's cheeks; her eyes looked like deep pools that have been stirred by a passing Andrew acknowledged that snap judgments in regard to the beauty of these small, quiet women are often misleading.

"Well." slowly, consideringly, "do

you object?"

"I? Oh, no. I don't mind when she brings him with her," she confessed "You see"—the words came rosily. hurriedly-"it's his farm that lies next to Mrs. Morrell's; and she's always telling him that he ought to cultivate it. He lets it lie wild because he cannot take the money to put into it; he needs it for other things-his experiments in metals, and all that, his books, his studies-lots of expenses that are connected with his profession. And-and I thought that if I would rent that land, and run it as Mrs. Morrell runs her farm, that he would have that money to do all the things that he is crazy to

"And you and he have talked this all over?" questioned Andrew mildly,

gently.

"Oh, no-no; no, indeed," she protested. "Mrs. Morrell and I have spoken of it once or twice; but I've

never hinted of my plan to him. We talk of other things." Sarah's face became a study in beatitudes. "We read Shelley, and he helps me to keep up my languages, which Mrs. Morrell says is

really very important."

"Yes—yes," agreed Andrew slowly, ponderingly, the while a twinkle shone far back in his eyes that were fixed in study upon his daughter. "Yes. Well"—he rose and took a step or two up and down the room—"I was thinking of asking a friend of mine, a man I know, in to dine with us, and have a game of bridge afterward, but if your friends—" Sarah looked up with protesting eyes. She was sure she knew whom that friend might be. "Well, we'll see."

But Gwynne Morrell did not wait for any such slow process of conventionality as a prospective dinner party; as soon as Sarah communicated to her the summary of this conversation colored by her own doubts and fears, Mrs. Morrell concluded with characteristic promptitude that the time had come to take matters into her own hands. It seemed worth while to let Andrew Morton know what an attractive sonin-law he might have if he would just leave his daughter's affairs alone and trust to the diplomacy which was being interested in her behalf. For her own part, Gwynne felt that this buying and selling in which he had been engaged for so long should cease when it came to his daughter and her future; so, picking up Morris, who had no inkling of her solicitudes and intentions on his behalf, late one afternoon, she "happened" in at the Mortons' "just to speak to Sarah a moment.'

Sarah was out, but Mr. Morton was at home, she was assured; Andrew and his three old cronies, having finished their play, were then settling up their

scores and accounts.

"We'll just wait for Miss Morton," she had said, with that cool authority which impresses even high-handed hall functionaries. "In the library," she murmured, as she was being gently but definitely propelled toward the drawing-room door.

Just at the doorway she met the three

old friends making their way out with gay laughter and quips anent the game. She scanned them quickly. "Not worth considering," was her sharp, conclusive comment, as they stood aside for her, and as the man announced her name, with her head held high, her deep-blue eyes shining—Gwynne's eyes always made you think of outdoors, of wide spaces, big sweeps of land and sea—the general manner that she assumed when she was about to throw stones at other people's pet hobbies, she went, a trifle imperiously, toward her host, Ramsay following.

Gwynne always seemed to grow taller, more lithe and slender, as she rose mentally to any occasion that she had in hand; and just now she seemed to float across the floor toward Andrew, who had turned in surprise at the intrusion, a gravely inquiring and, what might seem at first, a chilly expression

on his face.

This melted, however, into a charming cordiality, withal a lingering frost of formality upon it, as Andrew met his guest, though she remembered afterward that he had scarcely taken a step from his original position, and had waited her approach without a shade of effusiveness, letting her come to him; his quick gray eyes meeting hers, they looked into Gwynne's brilliant blue ones calmly.

Andrew, on his part, could not help noticing her approach; it delighted the man and the artist in him, nor could he help seeing the vigorous way that the hair sprang back from her broad, low forehead, nor the innate distinction and individuality that her imperious fashion of carrying herself gave her; and he was more than pleased to note that the corners of her mouth turned up, not down, and she brought into the lighted and heated room a crisp, clean perfume of cool September air.

"Sarah is not at home?" The cool, inquiring tone shaded off slightly, as Andrew continued to meet her gaze

calmly.

"Only Sarah's father." He smiled as he took the outstretched hand. "I am learning, very rapidly, what it means to have the equivocal distinction of being a father to a daughter."

He turned to Ramsay as Gywnne

murmured his name.

As Morton spoke both Ramsay and his sister were impressed with the quality of Andrew's voice; and, indeed, this had been one of his most useful assets in his claims upon Fortune. It was golden, mellow; it could be persuasive, confidential, but never servile; it was the voice of refinement, but through it thrilled self-confidence and power; and now and then it assumed a touch of quaint ancestral brogue, and Andrew knew how to use it.

Gwynne concluded impatiently that Sarah had given her no just estimate of her father, and to her further surprise, Ramsay went forward with that pleasing deference a younger man uses to an older one whom he admires.

"I heard only the other day," he said, with delightful frankness, "that I owed you thanks for putting me in the way of that little matter of the Cardinal Mine. I was told confidentially that you had suggested my name. I am sure that I owe you more than I can say."

But Andrew disclaimed any thanks. "I am the man who thanks. You were good enough, it seems"—he laughed genially, amusedly—"to confirm my opinion. That was enough. We all"—he waved his hand—"like to have our private opinions confirmed by an expert; and I was very glad to put the responsibility of convincing my associates on younger shoulders and broader ones than my own."

Gwynne felt the stones of opposition with which she had meant to bombard Andrew slipping from her hands; but she did not let them go; she merely took a tighter clutch upon them. It would never do to relinquish too quickly a previously conceived opinion of any person, simply because he happened to have a delightful manner.

"You were playing bridge?" There was a tone of cool condescension in her

voice.

"Yes-yes," admitted Andrew, as he drew a chair out for Mrs. Morrell and

motioned to Ramsay to take another. "Yes, we play here almost every afternoon."

Andrew had the ways of a courtier, Gwynne observed critically. Where on earth did he learn them?

"Do you play?" he asked, addressing

both of his guests.

They assured him of their sympathy for him.

"Then"—his eyes sparkled with enthusiasm—"you will understand. Sarah——" He ran his hand perplexedly across his forehead, with that whimsical shake of his head which was his only little habit of expression. "Sarah, I fear, is no true companion for me in my 'iniquities' of bridge, as she calls them, though she can play a good game now and then. She says that she scorns its seductions, and thinks that I waste my time. I assure her that her prejudice is puritanical, but she insists that it begets strange company." He laughed and shook his head.

Ramsay laughed rapturously, and leaned over and took the cigarette case

offered him companionably.

"We had just been playing a most interesting hand," Andrew explained. "I've made a note of it, and when Sarah comes in I'd like to have you play that over with me to see whether it could be played the same way again. I always jot them down in my book if they attract me, and when I'm lonely, I find much in them to absorb me. There is a great deal in this game that is meant to divert and amuse-much more than people imagine. It's not the playing of cards by rule or fashion, Mrs. Morrell, or a test of mental agility"-Andrew lifted his eyes and looked straight at Gwynne, a charming smile that seemed almost confidential curving his lips-"but it's the personal interpretation that one puts on the lay of the cards, the skill in combining two hands until they seem one, two minds that understand the rules of the game, and the unspoken language of every move, the strength or weakness back of it, the appeal for help or the command to keep hands off."

He dropped his eyes now to the

cards that he was slowly shuffling back

and forth in his hands.

"Why"—he lifted his face now, alive, alert, his eyes shining with an unquenchable enthusiasm—"it's life in miniature, and politics, business, or society—they're the table upon which we all play. We have the same old forms in cards, the same fashion of dealing; 'your pangs and pleasures of fifteen, at forty-five played o'er again;' but always a chance for a fresh deal, always the hope of a new combination to overcome. It's like the hope for to-morrow."

He turned to Ramsay, who was slowly smoking his cigarette, his eyes fixed ponderingly upon this small, keen man, who wore about him that indefinable

quality of charm.

"What's the use of a man thinking of himself as a mere card upon the table of life, a card to be played by a master hand, a helpless piece of 'the game He plays upon this checkerboard of nights and days'? He is himself the player. He is either leader, dealer, the dummy, or the clenching or ineffectual third hand. Some people have to learn to play." He shook his head amusedly, and smiled that delightfully confidential smile at Mrs. Morrell, as he lifted his eyes from the cards over which he had been philosophizing; and one would have been harder-hearted than Gwynne Morrell not to have felt in tune with this delightful companion who took for granted that you would be. "And some -as, for instance, Sarah-they don't really know their own capacities until they learn to put them to exercise; and some are willing to play dummy always, slipping away from responsibilities, without either ambition or desire; and some"-Andrew shook his head in that quaint fashion of his, waved his hand deprecatingly, while his face was a travesty of modesty-"and some, like myself, are natural-born players, have the bent toward it-like genius, you know.

Andrew looked up at Gwynne from under his eyes, the tiniest roll of brogue in his tones, his bewildering smile growing over his face slowly.

Ramsav broke into involuntary laughter, joyous, delighted. Gwynne was really obliged to join him. This was a perplexing personality, she was forced to acknowledge to herself. She had never met any one just like this man. She gazed at Andrew with luminous, questioning eyes, and he returned the gaze with eyes that did not waver, but which read the blue ones keenly. Was there a mutinous challenge in those blue eyes, a secret withheld, or was there merely delicate feminine mockery in their shining depths?

"Ah, here is Sarah!" he said, turning, as his daughter entered the room just at that moment. "Now, Sarah," he coaxed, putting his arm affectionately about her, "we're talking about your favorite game. Sit down," he urged, after she had spoken to her friends; "sit down and let us play over

a hand that I have here."

Hastily rearranging the cards, he put Ramsay to play with himself, Mrs. Morrell for leader, and Sarah, third hand.

"Just to see if we play it again as we four did previously," he explained.

As dealer, with a score nothing to twenty against him, he held eight, four, three of hearts; eight, four of diamonds; ace, king, knave, nine of clubs; king, six, four of spades, and he passed the make to Ramsay, who announced no trumps.

Mrs. Morrell, as leader, holding knave, ten, nine of hearts; queen, ten, six, five of diamonds; queen, seven, six of clubs; ten, nine, eight of spades,

led the five of diamonds,

Dummy went down with the ace, king of hearts; ace, nine, three, two of diamonds; ten, eight, five of clubs; queen, knave, seven, five of spades.

Third hand held queen, seven, six, five of hearts; king, jack, seven of diamonds; four, three, two of clubs; ace,

three, two of spades.

Andrew held up the ace of diamonds until the third round, and then undertook to establish his spades. The ace fell to the second round of spades, from the third hand, and Sarah then led her clubs. Andrew refused to finesse, and

took the trick with his ace, finished the spades, led the ace and king of hearts from the dummy hand, and then, the losing diamond up to the queen in Mrs. Morrell's hand, forcing her thus to return a club to his own tenace, making three tricks and thirty-six points. It was clever play in holding up, and throwing the lead, and Gwynne Morrell knew it. She turned quickly to Andrew, as if to ask why he had led that

losing diamond.

"My play," he said, bowing deferentially to her, with a little smile upon his face. "I was sure from your discard that you were protecting the queen in your hand, and that I could make you lead back to my clubs." Gywnne had discarded her nine of hearts on Andrew's last spade lead from the dummy. He turned to Ram-"Exactly the way we played it before you came in. It is a hand worth It expresses restraint. studying. like to study analogies," he explained: "it is always interesting to trace the traits of human nature, to define the animate through the inanimate, to see the active in the passive.'

Gwynne's eyes questioned, though her lips would not. She was beginning to stand in awe of this strange Her eyes traveled with deliberate scrutiny over him, searching for a clue to understanding him. Had he intended to intimate to her that she was playing a losing game, that he could force her to lead right up to his hand? She rose to go; she was reconsidering the intention that had brought her here.

But Ramsay was apparently not ready to go, nor was he interested in inanimate things or abstract human nature; his eyes were fixed upon Sarah, though he was evidently doing his best to be polite to Sarah's father.

Andrew turned to Sarah. "I wonder if Mr. Ramsay would be interested in my last new rug," he said. "Rugs are my hobby, just now," he explained, "and I would be glad to have your opin-ion on this one." He smiled. "Rugs He smiled. "Rugs are far removed from metals, but-Sarah, will you show it to Mr. Ramsay?"

As they walked out of the room. Andrew turned to his other guest.

"Sit down, Mrs. Morrell; we'll talk some more about the game, if you will,"

courteously.

"Why did you object?" Gwynne could contain herself no longer; she put the question abruptly, insolently almost, as she nodded toward the two who had now left the room together.

"I object?" questioned Andrew. "I object!" innocently, surprisedly, "Who said that I ever objected to such an obviously suitable affair? Why-" He paused impressively. "I arranged

Gwynne stared at Andrew Morton in unmitigated surprise. She gasped.

"Why-Mr. Morton," she started to

say. Morrell"-Andrew Mrs. leaned forward, his elbows on his knees, his hands dropped together, his face turned upward to Gwynne's with his own fascinating, whimsical smile upon his lips-"let me tell you. Sarah, as you know-or perhaps you do not know-is a very stubborn, self-willed young woman. It is the privilege of fathers to discover these traits, it seems, though I must say that I am sure that she inherited them from her mother. And women, like dreams, go by contraries; and so, I judged that it might be wise for Sarah to consider an alternative, in order that she might exercise to the full all of the contrary in her. How not to let her see the guiding hand of a parent has taken as much study as a hand at bridge." He sighed. "Most women," he confided, "need a guiding hand to direct them in the way that they would not go."
"Now, Mr. Morton," Gwynne spoke

impatiently, "you needn't tell me that you arranged this little affair between Sarah and Morris, or take the credit of it to yourself. I arranged that matter." Her blue eyes spoke imperiously.

"And Sarah undoubtedly thinks that she made her own choice." Andrew spoke mildly, inquiringly almost.

"And Morris is convinced that he alone directed his affairs." Gwynne laughed shortly.

"And you are certain that you were the guiding hand," Andrew mused, smiling indulgently.

"And I know that you were not."

Gwynne spoke positively.

"Let me tell you something." Andrew rose and stood, his hand on the table beside him, as if the position gave him a convincing dignity. "I can give you positive proof that my arrangement antedates yours; and I'll do so by asking you a question." His voice shook a trifle unsteadily. "Ever since the first time that I saw you I have intended to ask you this question; and every interest, every thought, every plan that I have made has been made toward the answer that I wanted to that question. It included Sarah's future and my own. Will you marry me?"

Gwynne raised her eyes to him in absolute amaze. She drew back into her chair as if shocked, but the thrill in Andrew's voice, the rich note of feeling, intense, compelling, moved her more than she knew, and his gaze held her. For almost a moment they looked at each other, searchingly, earnestly, and then, Gwynne's eyes faltered, dropped. In an effort to gain her self-control, she looked up half shyly.

"You would marry a farmer—a 'mud digger'?" she whispered in-

credulously.

Andrew pushed away the feminine little effort to tease, to gain time, with a wave of his hand. "I've been a farmer, and I love farming—anything that has the stamp of you upon it; but in farming, in any occupation, as in any game, as I endeavored to point out to you this afternoon, strength lies in a combination of interests."

He held out his hands to her as if he would draw her, compel her to come

to him.

"And—in this combination"— Gwynne looked up with a smile that shook a little about the edges—"who's to be the guiding hand?"

"I am," said Andrew promptly, with that winning whimsicality of his. "I

am. Will you marry me?"

There was a throb of reckless impulse running through Gwynne's whole being, spurred, it seemed, by the light in Andrew's eyes, the thrill in that wonderful, mellow, rich voice of his, the outstretch of his hands. She felt an overwhelming desire to know him better, to know him well. There was joy, a strange joy, in the fact that he wanted to marry her, and it lifted her, in this unlooked-for proposal, up to the gay, high notes of her temperament. She rose to her feet.

"Yes." There was not a tremor of any kind in Gwynne's voice. "Yes,"

she said.



THE UNKNOWING

THEY do not know the awful tears we shed,
The tender treasures that we keep and kiss;
They could not be so still—our quiet dead
In knowing this.

They do not know what time we turn to fill Love's empty chalice with a cheaper bliss; They could not be so still—so very still In knowing this.

THEODOSIA GARRISON.





TELLA VANE glanced from her reflection in the mirror to the wet canvas before her with a vague dissatisfaction. It was painted broadly, and

she had managed to keep the values of her difficult color scheme; yet it wanted —what? Stepping back, palette in hand, she turned her head from side to side, scrutinizing the portrait from every possible angle of vision. That settled the matter. When Stella could not look her work "in the eye," as she expressed it, there was something wrong.

The face that she studied so intently, though no longer that of a girl, was an unforgettable one. Perhaps it was the absence of any decided color note that gave the unusualness to its beauty. If her lips were pink, it was with the inside pinkness that is found about the petals of some white flowers just at the cup, and if her eyes were called "blue," it was the blueness of deep, indefinite things that depend for their hues upon the changing light. Even the hair was of no possibly determinate shade. Wonderful hair, coiling about her head like a blown flame, it seemed to have given its glow to the warm paleness of the skin. In the painting the shadow of it lay over the eyes that looked gray and absorbed-their suggestion of sluggish power denied the hint of eagerness in the parted lips.

As she dabbed an unmixed brushful of yellow ocher, cobalt, and white on a blond soil in a vain attempt to catch the glitter of it, a clatter of flying feet sounded upon the stairs. She did not

need to wait for the loud rap and imperative rattle of the doorknob to know that they were Ken's feet—no one else would *run* up that last flight.

The man who entered the room with a certain rush, as of an oncoming wind, was big-shouldered, muscular, lithe. His face was lean, yet handsome, and topped by a mass of fair hair brushed almost straight up from his head. The eyes, rather deep-set under the heavy, blond brows, were unusual—cold, yet burning, and of the color of beaten steel.

The woman turned toward him, but without coming forward. Her eyes were full of a veiled light, as of a lamp seen through a mist.

"I had given you up, Ken," she said. Her voice, sweet but not resonant, suggested the indefinite quality of her beauty.

"I'm sorry, Stell," the man said, "I know I'm late, but I've had a deuce of a time to get here at all. May I look at the portrait?"

"Not till I fix this eye; I smeared it

just as you came in."

"Very well, I'll wait. Lord, it's hot!" He began to fan himself with his hat, a soft felt. "I've been rushing round since morning."

"Weren't you at the office, Ken?"
"N-not to-day." The words seemed to come out with an effort. "I've got some news for you, Stell."

She smiled at him in the mirror.

"Will it please me?"

"I don't know." His brows drawn together in a troubled scowl, he avoided the smiling eyes. "I'm afraid—"

"Now," the girl interrupted, "you may tell me what you think of this."

With a quick movement, as of relief, he stepped before the canvas, closing his eyes till they looked like slits of steel between the fair lashes. "Best thing you've done yet," he said decidedly.

Stella smiled. Ken was always sure

of himself-and her.

"Do you mean artistically or as a portrait?"

"Both. That flesh is awfully well treated. And it certainly is like you you've even caught that light-in-themist effect of those difficult eyes of yours. Come down here." Slipping an arm about her, he stepped backward, drawing her with him. "There," said, as they reached the end of the room, "see how it carries?"

"Yes," she agreed, "it does carry; but don't you think that there is some-

thing missing?"

"Nothing that is not missing in you," he answered lightly. "Unless the hair. Stell-you haven't got that-no one ever will!"

Stella drew away from his arm and

went back to the canvas.

"It is not easy," she admitted, in a

listless voice.

"Easy! You might as well try to paint raveled moonlight." He followed her up. "I'd like to have that head when you're tired seeing it round."

"Must one always tire of seeing a

thing round?"

"Always-in time."

"Even if it is a fine thing?" "In that case, sooner."

"Why 'sooner'?"

"Because then one can't afford to ignore it for a moment. Only"-he paused to swing himself upon a high stool-"if it was a really fine thing a fellow might want it back after a bit."

She looked at him with a little fluttering smile that always seemed to have died in her eyes before it reached her

"Then I won't give you my portrait one doesn't like to have to regret one's generosity.'

Ken laughed, a big, resonant laugh,

that seemed to want unwalled space and rushing winds to scatter into. As he sat sprawling easily against the light tone of the tapestry, his fighter's head and strongly hewn face suggested a Canova boxer resting.

"Ken Hamilton may never do anything," a college friend had once said of him, "but he will certainly do every-

thing.

So far it might be said that he was well on his way to fulfill this prediction, as at the age of twenty-five he had already flirted in and out of half a dozen professions. Electrical engineer, chemist, mineralogist, to free-lance journalist, and finally editor of a sporting paper. These perpetual changes were not owing to any failure or lack of ability on his part—no one with any knowledge of Ken ever doubted the existence of the latter. It seemed, rather, that the scattered forces of his nature lacked something cohesive to bind them

together.

Stella alone had never doubted that the boy would one day find himself, and achieve the "great thing" of which she believed him capable. The two had known each other from the time that his father and hers were the only near neighbors in that lonely valley in the Middle West. Since they had first listened to the small talk of birds in the Big Silence, and fished in the creeks with a hook made out of a bent pin, she had mothered him-as much, perhaps, from that older, saner element in her nature as from the height of her five years' vantage. Even over the gap of his college days—he in New York, she painting in a Western town—they had flung a bridge of letters. A year ago Ken had apparently settled as a responsible editor; and when, a little later, the chance had come to Stella to carry her art to the Eastern city, the thought of him had made the great vortex call like home. Once in propinquity to each other it had seemed perfectly natural to slip into what was almost the old companionship with shortened intervals of play.

Stella painted irresolutely for a few minutes, but her joy in her work had gone from her. "Nothing that is not missing in you!" How unconsciously -and inevitably-he always hurt her. Suddenly remembering that he had something to tell her, she laid down the palette and turned to him.

"Is there anything wrong with the paper, Ken?"

A sun spot, round and ruddy like a gold coin, had slipped through the sky-light and settled on her hair. The man stared at it, his lashes flickering as though it dazzled him.

"No-at least, I resigned from the

paper yesterday.

She looked at him with eyes that had suddenly become gray and boding like those of the portrait.

"Why?"

"Many reasons. I'm sick of the deadly, monotonous grind of office work-I was never cut out for it. I want action, Stell, I've got to get back to the hum of machinery and the grinding of the screws. Lord! Every time I go near the printing room it gets at me.'

"I know, Ken," she said sympathetically, "you've always loved it. Do you remember the time that they brought along a traction engine to fix the road, and it got out of order and wouldn't work? You were only eight then, but you wanted to crawl underneath and find out what was wrong." She smiled at him tenderly. "You said that some day you'd make a better one."

"That's just it!" He slid from the stool and came close to her, his eyes alight. "I've been working at something for the last few months. Now I

think I've got it perfected."

"An invention, Ken, and successful!" "I guess so, God, but I've slaved for it-night after night! How I used to hate to have to go down to that confounded office mornings!"

She listened, remembering how he had absorbed every atom of her confidence for the past year, how only a week ago she had confided to him all her poor, little hopes for that portrait

series.

"You were very—still about it."

"Yes. I don't believe in talking over

a thing that may never be realized. However, it's all fixed up now—I placed it last week."

"You have not told me what it is,"

she reminded him.

"There's no use in going into details, Stell, and you wouldn't understand, but it's a new method of separating gold from quartz. This doesn't mean much to you, perhaps, but it's going to revolutionize the mining industry of the world. It'll do the work that is being done at the present time at one-half the labor and cost. In fact there are millions in it."

"Millions!" Stella watched him a moment half fearfully. His eyes were shining; there was something hard and cold in them, like the steel he loved.

"I've signed a three-year contract with the New York representative of the company I've closed with," he went on, "I'll have to take charge for them, you see. I've been pretty lucky to land straight away."

Stella felt her heart struggle queerly

upward.

"Where is it that you are going?"

she managed to ask.

There was a moment's silence. Ken did not turn his head, but his eyes

seemed to look past her.

"To South Africa-on the Orient tomorrow morning." In spite of all his preparation the man felt that the truth had left him, hard and bruising, as a shot stone. He waited uncomfortably, but Stella did not speak. Mechanically she lifted a tube of vermilion and began to squeeze out the contents with shaking fingers. In a moment, he blundered on: "As well now as a month later, dear; after all, it's only three years, you know!"

Stella crushed the empty tube in her fingers, the red ooze staining them like

blood.

"And then—you will come back?" He took her hands and bent his head till his lips touched her hair.

"I will come back-in three years." Three years! His maddening reiteration of it hurt her head like the near sound of a gong.

"Suppose you meet your 'ideal

woman'?" she said, hating herself for the folly of the words as soon as they

had left her lips.

He shook his head, and his eyes grew dreamy. She felt the clasp of his hands loosen.

"I'll never meet her—if I did, she'd

die, or something."

"Would you know her if you met

her?" she asked gently.

"I think I would. Sometimes in a crowd I've thought that I caught a glimpse of her. Good Lord! What a fool a man can be!" He broke off, smiling shyly, like an embarrassed giant. "You know you're the only woman that I could talk to like this."

With a little shiver, Stella drew her-

self from his lax embrace.

"I know that, Ken; I appreciate it." Her heart was quiet enough now, ticking faintly, like a stopping watch. "It is what I have always hoped for you," she went on, "that you would find yourself—do some big, world-moving thing—and Ken, I want you to know that wherever you go you carry my friend-ship with you. All my hopes will be for your success."

"Thanks, Stell," he said huskily. "Heavens, what a comrade you've been —what a comrade you are! I don't think that I'll ever meet another woman

like you."

She smiled at him strangely.

"Are you sure that you know just what kind of a woman I am?"

He gave her a swift glance.

"As much as any one can at such near perspective. Do you know that we've been too close all our lives to really know each other?" She did not answer, and he went on: "That's another reason that I'm glad to be able to get away for a while—I want to stand off and look back at things and people."

"To see if they carry?"

"Yes, that's it." He turned and looked closely at the portrait on the easel. "I'd like to have that head of you. I suppose you wouldn't give it to a fellow?"

"The paint wouldn't be dry," she said

chokingly.

"Well, when I come back?"

She nodded, economizing her words.

"Have you long to stay?"

"I ought not to be here now," he said ruefully. "You see, I've got to pack and a deuce of a lot of things. I'll run up again in the morning, Stell."

"No," she said, and the effort to steady her voice left it a broken whis-

per, "we'll say good-by now."

He drew her close to his breast, and

she lay there, her face hidden.

"Kiss me, dear," he said, but she did not move. Slipping a hand under her chin, he tried gently to lift her head. "Stell." Slowly she turned her face till her lips touched his hand, and clung there quivering. The next moment she felt his heart pounding against hers, and his arms pressing her convulsively. "Stell," he said huskily, "kiss me, and let me go; if I stay another moment I'll want to let the whole thing slide."

"No, no, you mustn't quit now, Kenny!" In the trouble that was shaking her, the old play-name fluttered from

her lips.

He kissed her, his eyes moist.

"I'll write from the first port, Stell. Good-by, little chum, I—"

She listened breathless, but the word that she craved did not come. Instead, he kissed her again, and, abruptly, his arms left her. A second later she heard his firm tread descending the stairs, and this time he did not run.

Sinking upon a chair, she listened intently. The sound of the street door closing left the room full of a sickening stillness—a stillness that would have to reach on and on; it was like the first taste of torture. She did not move until objects began to blur around her, and the night fell grayly through the skylight above her head. Then she crept to the window and, throwing open the shutters, leaned out.

The city was glowing in the live darkness. Where the roofs were melting into the purple above, a great spire flung many colored lights against the pallor of the stars. A wind met her roughly, blowing a salt breath into her throat and curving about her body like a bent arm. She had a quick vision of

spars and a sagging chain that whipped a quivering hulk with her sleek nose southward.

It had been an oppressive day in the city, even for the end of July; the heat still lay like a moist hand over the housetops, and oozed, humid, insinuating, through the closed shutters.

In her studio Stella moved restlessly to and fro. She was carefully dressed. Her gown, cut just low enough to show the still beautiful throat, clung to her lithe body like the sheath of a flower. It was of a subdued green, a green that she wore only at night, because then it harmonized best with the clusive shade of her eyes. There was no touch of any other color—the dull gold of the buckle at her belt might have been a deeper braid of her hair.

Lifting a canvas from the wall, she laid it upon an easel, beside the mirror, and stood intent, motionless, gazing at it

It was as she had thought: the glass no longer gave back her reflection as she had painted three years ago. It was hard to say wherein the change lay; she only knew that something was gone, and something elusive, intangible that belongs to youth. It was not that there were lines on her face; for her skin was still soft and smooth. It was, rather, a certain opaqueness, a deadness that seemed to come from within, as though like the sapless core of a tree she were aging from the heart out. She thought of other women who she knew must be years older than herself, and who yet looked young and beautiful. But those women were happy and beloved. Who was it that had said "Caresses beautify the flesh of a woman as a flower is fed by the sunshine and the dew"?

Drearily she turned away.

Picking up a letter that she had received from Ken that morning, she reread it as she had already done many times. Here and there a characteristic sentence stood out: "I knew just how much you mattered before I was here a month, Stell, and I've known it ever since." He had known it in a month,

and he had not spoken for three years! The next words read like a halting apology: "I wanted to wait till I was sure, because if I said a word to a woman I'd never draw it back. Besides, I didn't want to bind you." A faint smile touched her lips. How sure he had been, how sure he was of her! The date of the letter showed July 1st; it must have come across on the same boat as himself. His other letters had told Short, perfunctory notes, her little. kind and fraternal always, but touching on nothing more personal than his work, which seemed to possess him like a passion. For three years she had been schooling herself to live without him; learning that the passing of a mail with no word from him was a hurt to be received as lightly as it was given; teaching her heart to accept without revolt the careless insufficiency of the letter when it came.

And that morning his word had clamored to her, a message over a dead wire.

It was still light when he came, but the sun had gone off the roofs and the steeples were tipped red like spears after a battle. It was the hour when even unlovely outlines blur, and her face in its blown cloud of hair looked strangely beautiful. He stood peering at her through the dusk.

"Stell!" he cried, and she reached a hand to him. "Stell, is it really you, the same old Stell?" Through her thin gown she felt the warmth of his hands and a sense of drifting came over her. "Did you expect me, did you get my letter?" he asked in a breath.

"Yes, I was waiting for you." Her heart fluttered against his hand; her lips trembled under the strangeness of his kiss,

"Dear!" He caressed her hair, smiling contentedly. "I was a fraid it hadn't reached you—the room was dark."

"It is so hot," she said, "and you know I love the twilight. Let us sit by the window, Ken; it is coolest there."

"Not till I have a look at you."

Pressing the button of the electric globe, he drew her to the light. She was aware of an almost physical sense

of shrinking as his eyes scanned her face, intently, pitilessly. He was little changed, she noted; save that the fair skin was tanned, and the direct eyes held a hint of secretiveness, he was the same exuberant, overbearing boy-man who had gone from her.

As they looked at each other, she fancied that she saw disappointment in

his face, and smiled faintly,

"Three years make a change, Ken!" "In externals merely."

It was not a happy answer, and, hearing it, she knew how unprepared he must have been.

"In all. Did we not agree long ago that externals were the true expression of the inwardness of things?"

"Did we?" He laughed easily. "Well, don't let us get on the 'inward-

ness of things' just yet!"

He placed her in a chair by the window and, drawing another beside it, sat down, his arm embracing her shoulders. A faintness came over Stella. warmth of his aura seemed to encompass her like a flame; it was assailing the wall between, that gray wall, the building whereof had taken her so many slow, laborious months. wonderful to be able to sit beside you again, Stell, to look at, touch you! Just now that is enough for me, almost."

"It is not enough for me," she said, in a tremulous haste, "there is so much that I want to know, so much that you

have to tell me,"

"I would rather listen for a while. I want to hear your voice, I've wanted it every day for three years. Heaven, how I used to count the months! I told you that I had a room in the manager's house at Johannesburg? Well, the very first week I found a place inside the wardrobe, and cut 'Ken' with my pocketknife into the wood; thirtysix inches below I carved 'Stell.' On the first day of every month I used to mark off one of those confounded inches with a star." He smiled at her with something of a boy's shyness. often wanted to tell you about it. It would have been ridiculous for a man to write such a thing in a letter!'

Stella smiled faintly. She could have told him that there had been a time when the knowledge of that little "fool thing" might have thrown a light for her to steer by, Instead, she said:

"And your invention, Ken, it has been the success that you hoped for?"

"Success? Yes, I think that I may call it that. It has done all that I claimed for it, and more." He sat back, some of the warmth gone out of his face. "It's going to make me rich, Stell, even as riches go in New York.' "Is the patent still yours?"

"Yes. I've had an offer from a company in Montana already." He studied her face attentively. "I can sell to them and remain here, or go over and take

charge, as I please." "Will you go?"

"That is for you to decide, dear." He leaned toward her, suddenly very "Stellpale.

But she rose swiftly, avoiding his reaching hands, and crossed to the por-

trait on the easel.

"This is the head that I was painting when you went away, Ken. Won't you look at it?"

He rose reluctantly, and stood beside "You were right," he said, after a

moment's silence; "it wants something." "That I have?" she asked quickly. He put his arm about her and drew

her back to the window seat.

"Well, that you had not."

"Added years?" she suggested, with a bitter flicker of a smile.

"No, the meaning of them." He looked at her tenderly. "Go on talking, Stell; I want to hear your voice, I've wanted it every day for three years."

Despite herself, the woman felt the warmth coming back to her heart, as

under a chafing hand.

"But I would rather listen to you!" "Yes," he said thoughtfully, "I suppose I've lots to tell. But, Lord, what does it all amount to? A man leaves behind more than he carries away."

"Does he leave his ideals?" she asked,

observing him.

"My dear Stell, a man's ideals are

like his second teeth, something he's bound to lose if he lives long enough."

"Even so; the process is slow in either case, and there isn't much of life left after."

"Right, Minerva! But the ideals go

first, you know!"

Stella leaned toward him, the breeze from the open window stirring her hair. The color note of her gown had leaped to her eyes; they looked green and shining in the pale oval of her face.

"Tell me, Ken," she said, and her voice was very sweet and soft, "is she

strong, your ideal woman?"

A comb slipped from her blown hair and fell upon his knees. He lifted it, drawing a long, shimmering thread from the scrap of tortoise shell.

"Yes, but in a very feminine and ap-

pealing way."

"Then it isn't real strength?"

"That's where you're wrong." looked down, winding the hair about his finger into a golden ring. "You see, a woman may be strong, but a man must be able to remember every moment of the time that she is a woman."

"I see." Her voice quivered a little.

"Is she anything like me, Ken?"

"Oh, look here!" He ran his hand through his thick, blond hair with an embarrassed laugh. "This kind of thing makes a man feel like a fool! Well, then, she has a good deal that you have and a little that you have not.'

"What is it that I have not?"

"How can I tell? You might get a salad served up and find one of the ingredients missing, but you couldn't say just what, unless you'd made the salad."

He looked at her expectantly, half

smiling, and Stella rallied.

"One can eat a personality as one

can eat a salad, you know."

"Not yours! That's one of your attractions, Stell, there is always something to come back to." One hand was lying loosely on her lap, and he lifted it in both his. "I am waiting for an answer to my letter, darling." The unused word broke from his lips in a husky whisper, and his hands closed crushingly over hers, but the slender fingers gave no responsive clasp.

"I have been considering it," she said

quietly.

For a minute Ken did not speak.

"I shouldn't have thought it needed much consideration," he said at last.

"You did not seem to find it so," she

reminded him.

"But I explained all that, Stell, I

said-

"You would 'hate to say a word to a woman, and then draw it back'; well, so would I!"

His face flushed.

"I thought that you cared for me, Stell. No matter what you say I believe that you do care for me.'

Like a fanned flame the color leaped from his face to hers, leaving him pale.

"You are quite right," she said deliberately, "I care for you very much," "Then what is there to consider?"

"I am older than you."

"That remark is my earliest recollec-tion of you, Stell," he said, with a flicker of a smile. "You were wont to use it as a sort of moral thumbscrew to squeeze obedience out of me."

But her eyes met his, grave, unsmil-

"Then, you may meet your 'ideal.'" "Again!" He looked at her resentfully. "You use that unlucky confidence of mine as a sort of mental probe. But I ought not to have told you; there are things that a man should not speak of."

"Still," she repeated, "you may meet

her."

"But I won't," he cried, "no man ever does! If he discovers as much as a fragment of her, he ought to put his head in the dust.'

"Suppose," she suggested, "that he meets more than one fragment?"

"You're all right, Stell; you catch a man's words and throw them back at him!"

A silence came and sat between the two, and across it their eyes held each other. Stella had a sense as of something tightly drawn between them. Involuntarily she thought of a contest they had once had for a piece of rope

with which Ken was determined to flog a dog that had disobeyed him. The struggle had ended in the rope snapping, she remembered.

"Ken, why did you leave me?"

He hesitated, unready.

"It was necessary-in any case we had time to wait."

"We," she whispered bitterly, but he

did not hear it.

"Besides, if I hadn't gone away, I might never"—he stumbled, groping for words-"I mean it helped me to see you properly. You're too big for close inspection. Stell; one can't judge a mountain by standing at the bottom and looking up.

Stella rose and stood looking down at him. She was very pale, and the curious veiled light behind her eyes seemed to be on the point of breaking through like a flame through a thin curtain.

"Yes," she said, and her light voice had taken on a deeper tone, "that expresses your attitude toward me! I am to be studied from a distance like a... mountain or like an impressionist drawing, to see if I 'carry'! To be weighed in the cold balance of your egoism and found wanting, to be put aside for years, and taken out and looked at again. Always as though I was something different from other women, something apart, aloof, some inanimate, unsuffering thing." The words came slow, crushing like a torrent moving sluggishly.

At the first of her speech Ken had jerked his head back in the way of a man who has a handful of dried leaves thrown across his eyes; but as she ended, he swung to his feet and faced

her, white and shaken.

"Stell," he began unsteadily, "though I have been a fool, I was never a brute! At least, I didn't mean to hurt you. Will you believe—"

She laughed softly.

He left her at that and commenced to stride up and down the room. A chair blocked his way, and he swept it aside with his foot. Staring out unseeingly at the lighted city, she did not move or speak to him, and presently he came back to her side.

"Don't let us quarrel on my first night home," he said huskily. "You know that you matter to me!"

"I don't matter enough," said the

woman wearily.

"For you, you mean?" She did not answer, and for a moment the tinkle of a piano floating in through the open window made a riot in the stillness. Then Ken went on crudely, speaking in jerks: . "There's something a man can't give, it has to be taken from him. I tried to tell you before; the sureness of you seems to leave me not indifferent-don't think-

"I understand, Ken," she said, with trembling lips, "please don't say any

"No," he agreed dejectedly, "I guess we've talked enough for to-night." He reached for his hat. "Do you wish me to stay any longer?" She shook her head, pressing her lips together. "Stell," he said humbly, "I want you to believe that I'd rather cut my own heart than hurt yours, knowingly. Will you forgive me?"

"There is nothing to forgive, you

have only told me the truth."

"Half the truth! Perhaps to-mor-He held out his hand. "Won't you say good night to me?"
"Good night!"

Their hands touched for a moment and fell apart like live wires charged with opposing currents.

At the door he paused. "When shall I come again?"

"Do not come again. He came back a step.

"Stell! What do you mean?"

"What I say," she said steadily; "as I am a fragment, let me be unattached."

"You are jealous of an idea!" he

"Not so; you have merely made me understand that in me it could never be realized."

He flung away with a gesture of impotent anger.

"I'm sick of juggling with words; a man wants something more!"

"So does a woman," she said sadly. She stood, her head slightly bowed, hands clasped loosely before her; unconsciously to herself there was more appeal in her attitude than the man beside her had ever seen.

His face softened.

"Stell," he pleaded, "you are the only woman that has ever mattered to me, the only woman who ever will matter. Don't let a phantom come between us, a dream! Don't put me out of your life!" But she waved him away. "No, don't tell me; I'll go." He flung open the door. "Only remember, some day I'll have to come back."

When the street door banged reverberatingly, Stella roused herself. She knew only that she was tired, very tired. She felt as though she had been buffeted by a strong wind. The overturned chair gave the room an untidy aspect, and she lifted it mechanically, taking care to replace it in its exact position. Involuntarily, she thought of other nights when she had picked up the litter of his toys.

In the adjoining house a party of Norwegian students were rollicking. Gusts of laughter and song blew in. Suddenly there came a woman's voice, singing Solveig's song from "Peer

Gynt":

"Kanske der vil gaa Baade vinter og vaar---"

"Maybe there will pass both winter and spring." The words throbbed like a wound, and she closed the window to shut them out.

"But once you will come," the reedy voice triumphed,

> "That know I for sure, For you promised last time."

Pressing her hands upon her heart to hold it down, she mocked at the puling faith of the words; scorning the *Solveigs*, who had not vindicated their strength, the woman flowers who drooped upon their stems waiting, waiting, as rooted plants wait for the recreant rain. And, turning to the mirror, she beheld within the reflection of a lonely woman with asking eyes.

Men engang vil du komme . . . For det loved du sist.

Her vision blurred, and it seemed

to her that a fair form floated toward her. Through a haze of tears she saw a wondrous face dimly, and two eyes, that seemed to hold within their mysterious depths all the fire that she had somehow missed, looked into hers. The sweet lips smiled. "I am the Eternal," they chanted soundlessly, "the Godbegot. I am for all men and for none, yet he who has looked upon my face must follow ever, seeking where I am not. Imperturbable, I tread upon your puny loves. I am the Denial and the Dream."

Stella stretched forth her hands: "Give him back to me; I will share him

with you!"

And it seemed to her that the shadow hands reached out and touched her own.

The summer and fall had passed away, and the grip of winter was upon the city. A thin snow was falling over the housetops, drifting like a cloud of white moths against the window where Stella was sitting, her hands lying listlessly on her lap, her eyes gazing out at the leaden skies. She was paler and more frail, but her eyes were burning; it seemed as though the gray fire behind at last had broken through.

The sounds of the city reached her dully, for the snow had padded the wheels of the skidding cars, and swathed the feet of the passers-by. It was the first snowfall of the season. and the muffled sounds of the traffic vexed her more than silence would have done. To-day, that odd feeling of being upon the outside of things, like a child who, refused a share in some joyous game, is compelled to look sadly on, was strong in her. She was aware of a desire for action, even strife, anything that would serve to draw her into the current of that fierce, throbbing life, that had flung her to one side; flung her rudely, without care.

She had received no word from Ken; after that one wild moment on the night they parted, had told herself that she desired none. Yet to-day she had taken out his last letter, touching it lingeringly, her eyes dwelling on every word of

that bold, beloved scrawl.

When a knock sounded at the door, a light, hesitating knock, she thrust it guiltily into a drawer, and crossed the room.

Some inexplicable feeling made her hesitate a second; then she turned the handle.

"Stell," said an unsteady voice, "may

I come in?"

Stella's heart fluttered chokingly upward; then she reached out a tremulous hand.

mous nand

"Ken! I did not know your knock." For a moment their eyes held each other; then the man stepped within, holding the little hand against his breast.

"I told you," he said, "I would have

to come back.'

"I am pleased to see you." She smiled at him, trying to steady her voice. "Won't you sit down for a while?"

For a moment the padded sounds of the street clamored to her; then Ken

spoke, almost roughly.

"Don't take me this way, Stell! There's no room for a cold formality between you and me. Be sincere with me as you've always been. No"—as she would have withdrawn from his circling arm—"stay here! If I don't matter to you any longer, tell me so; it will be only what I've expected!"

"Ken," said the woman faintly, "why have you come back to hear what has all been said? You found me wanting—."

But he drew her closer till she felt

her heart fluttering against his.

"You were all there; it was I who was wanting! Can't you forgive me for my blindness?" Her face was hidden against his shoulder, but he kissed the soft hair. "I love you, Stell; I need you; my life is just a gray emptiness to me without you." And she listened, as in a dream, to the words that she had hungered for through the waiting years.

"Don't spare me," he went on, with a break in his voice. "If it's too late, I'll bless you, little chum! I'll go away again. Only speak to me; say something! Stell, have I killed your love?" She lifted her face at that, and a light leaped in her eyes like a flame through

stirred ashes.

And outside the snow fell silently, and the soft-footed people hurried by.

An hour later Stella looked at her lover with a lurking smile; a strange, new Stella, warm-lipped, glowing, dewy-eyed.

"Ken," she whispered, "don't you love your dream woman any longer?"

"Better than ever," he said between two kisses, "because I have found her!"



THE WINDS

HERE on the open moor, Under the open sky, With a surge as of restless feet The hosts of the winds go by.

Whence they came who kens?
Whither they fare who knows?
The tropic jungle deeps,
The vast of the arctic snows!

Out of and into the void—
Space with no bound or span!
Freed from its mortal gyves,
So with the spirit of man!
CLINTON SCOLLARD,



THE EQUATION



MORGAN ROBERTSON



APTAIN BILL FLANDERS walked down East Twentythird Street toward the Yacht Club dock, tired, mentally and physically. Back

and forth from the big steam yacht which he commanded, to ship chandler, boss carpenter, boss painter, and boss rigger, he had traveled, night and day, for four weeks; but at last the work was done, and the yacht, shining like a piece of cabinet work, waited at anchor off the landing for the owner and his daughter, who, with other guests, were to make the Mediterranean cruise.

Bill had not slept for the last two nights, nor bathed nor shaved for the last four. He was irritable, cranky, and when he came upon a crowd of half-grown hoodlums egging a mongrel dog on to a small black kitten in the clutches of one, Bill gave way. He spared the dog, for the dog was pal-pably not in sympathy with the project, but he mercilessly punished the rest. First, he grabbed the kitten, and stowed the wee creature in his pocket, then he went for the gang, and, with fists and boots, so afflicted them that they fled, howling and swearing, from his vicinity. He sped them with stronger profanity, and when the last rowdy had disappeared around corners or into saloons, Bill went his way with the kitten purring gratefully under his big but soft hand.

Bill felt better for the experience. Bill was a bachelor, whose life's experiences had been sadly devoid of sentiment. He was, or had been, a "bilge midshipman," as they say in the navy—that is. a student at Annapolis who had failed to pass the final examination.

and had then gone to sea as he could, simply for the love of the sea. He had put in one voyage before the mast in a Yankee ship, and learned self-control; had sailed in English ships, and learned to eat anything edible not named in the Board of Trade allowance; had tried Norwegian, German, Italian, Scotch, and Russian craft, and learned the fundamentals of the Brotherhood of Man; and then, waking up, he had taken to American yachts, and soon risen to command. He was a blond giant, smooth shaven and gentle of speech, except when aroused; then his face grew dark, and his voice took on the accents of a fireman's trumpet.

It was late in the evening; he hailed the anchor watch, and the dinghy put off and took him on board. He saw that all was well, and turned in, first feeding the kitten and stowing it in his berth. In the morning the little black mite was still with him, and he fed it again, then shut it in his room while he attended to business. And it may be mentioned here that, as the days went on, the kitten grew plump and playful and lovable, while Big Bill Flanders' big heart grew bigger as it infolded the pet.

But the business of that morning was the cleaning up of the yacht, and the taking aboard of the owner and guests. They came, at ten o'clock, and Captain Bill and the steward received them at the gangway. The owner was the conventional wealthy man, dignified and severe, who spoke sternly to his sailing master, politely to his guests, and smiled only upon his daughter, a person who invited and demanded smiles. The abashed steward smiled,

as he took her bundle of shawls from her; Big Bill smiled, as he sent forward a thundering order for men to lift the baggage out of the boat; and the cabin boy smiled, as he opened the companion door for her. She was about twenty-one, with dark hair and eyes, and of medium height and build, beautiful, as men value beauty, but with the additional charm of presence that we cannot name except as person-The friends of such people smile with them, laugh with them, frown with them, and suffer with them. and each thinks it emotion of his own. She had smiled upon Bill, and he went forward, smiling himself, and happier than he had been for years—for all the years since he had hoped for his commission, and failed to pass the test. He spared a few moments to the kitten, fondling, stroking, and caressing it, then tucking it snugly beneath his blanket against the time when he would come again.

In bringing this kitten aboard, Bill was guilty of disobedience; the owner had told him explicitly that the big yacht was to be kept clear of cats. But as the owner had given no reason for this embargo, he had considered it merely the whim of the moment, expressed by an irritable old man, and

forgot it quickly.

Bill conned the big steam yacht down the river, through the Narrows, and out to sea by the Ambrose Channel; then, just a little tired, and able to enjoy a smoke, he was about to call the mate to the bridge, when Miss Mayhew appeared. She climbed the steps, rigged out in a hooded mackintosh—for there was a Scotch mist in the air—and with her was one of the guests—a tall, well-built, intellectual-looking fellow named Pearson, a lawyer, as Bill knew by the steward's gossip, and a devoted attendant on Miss Mayhew.

"You are the captain, aren't you?" ventured the girl. "Do you know, Captain Flanders, that I've never met a real captain in my life, until now, though I've read of so many? Have you ever led a cavalry charge?"

"What?" gasped Bill. "Why, Miss

Mayhew! No, I'm a seafaring man,

not a soldier."

"There are several kinds of captain, Miss Mayhew," interposed the lawyer, smiling. "There is the captain of a battleship, we'll say, or of a cruiser, a destroyer, or the captain of a merchant ship, a North River sloop, a mud scow, a tug, or a canal boat; then we have captains in the army, who might lead cavalry charges, and we have captains of militia—tin soldiers, some call them—and captains of industry, captains in the Salvation Army, captains of police, and captains of boy soldiers in the parochial and industrial schools."

"And where, and how, do you classify me?" said Bill, his eyes opened wide, and his voice tense and re-

strained.

"You?" said the lawyer. "Why, under the rules of the New York Yacht Club, you are not a 'captain,' but a 'mister.' You are Mister Flanders,

not Captain Flanders."

"I am?" stuttered Bill, in a suppressed fury of rage. "Yes, you're right. Under the rules of the club I am mister, while the owner is captain, but in the minds of my crew I am called captain of this ship, and away from soundings, under the law, I am captain, with power backed by the law, to put a recalcitrant guest in irons if he gets too fresh. Get off this bridge instantly, or I'll call my men; and if you resist, I'll have you in irons."

"You will?" asked the smiling Pearson. "Well, all right; put me in irons, and I will deprive you of your license."

"You will not!" stormed Bill.
"We're off the three-mile limit, and on
the high seas. Get off this bridge, or
I will confine you for mutinous insubordination. Go, and go quickly, or I'll
call the boatswain."

"Gentlemen, Captain Flanders, Mr. Pearson," interposed the girl, anxiety and apprehension in her face. "Please do not quarrel. Why should you?"

She looked appealingly at Bill, and his rage left him. Yet it took a moment or two before he could speak sanely, then he said:

"Of course not. Mr. Pearson, I apologize for my share in this?"

"And I apologize for mine," responded the lawyer; "but I think it best, Miss Mayhew, that we go down now. Good afternoon, Mister Flan-ders."

He smiled sweetly as he spoke, and turned his back, and the girl smiled, too, but from a different motive, as Bill could readily perceive. There was trouble in her face-embarrassment, shame, and sympathy-and something else which Bill could not analyze.

"Don't mind," she whispered, then followed her escort down the steps.

Bill called his first mate, gave him the course, and went to his room abaft the pilot house. Here he lit his pipe, and lay down-all standing-in his berth; but not to sleep, only to think of the bright face peeping out of the mackintosh hood, and the troubled smile, and the whispered admonition. He thought, too, of the blackness of lawyers, and dozed off profanely reviling them, to be wakened by the purring and caresses of the kitten. petted the small thing, and forgot Mr. Pearson, but remembered the troubled smile and the whispered words.

After that the girl came many times to the bridge, and always without es-cort of father or admirer. There were plenty of these, and Bill took the measure of all, as he glanced aft occasionally, and saw them dancing attendance upon her. There was a little slim fellow, named Arsdale, whom the steward described as an artist; a big, portly gentleman, named Muggins, who was a famed short-story writer-and Bill, as he looked at him, wondered why he himself could not write short stories and be famous-and a magazine editor on his vacation, a fine fellow, as men go, one who had especially commended himself to Bill by his tact, his appreciation of the big fellow's inborn qualities, and by his deprecation of his own. "I'm only an editor," he had said, "a critic of other men's work. I'd give my job if I could do something original, if I could write something, or do something, or paint something, or kill

something. I have tried the last, but never succeeded; the authors I tried to kill got new life from other editors, so —what's the use?" This man's name was Elkins, and Bill liked him, until he saw Miss Mayhew smiling on him; then he classed him in with the rest. A man in love is not reasonable, and this was Big Bill's condition, as he was forced to remind himself when the gossipy steward informed him that, to the best of his understanding, Miss Mayhew was an adopted daughter, and in no way likely to inherit the vast wealth of the father-stock and bonds, steamship lines, railroads, and such things. As a rich man's daughter, she was out of his reach, and, as an honorable man with a full supply of self-respect, he could not make an advance. But as a ward, a poor dependent, she was on his level, and the big soul of the big boy rejoiced. He loved her, and he would have her. So he told himself, joyously and courageously.

Another man among the guests worried Bill, until he learned that he was the family doctor; he worried him by his assiduous attentions to the girl, even against the presence of his own wife in the party, and it was the owner himself who set the matter right. Doctor Calkins, it transpired, had been a member of the family, practically, since the girl was born. So, with his rivals all placed and classified, Big Boy Bill grew tranquil. But he still kept his

eye on Pearson.

And so the big yacht charged across the Atlantic, with Bill on the bridge or in his room with the kitten, the male contingent of the guests attending upon Miss Mayhew, and Miss Mayhew herself seemingly indifferent to their attentions, manifesting a strong desire for Bill's society on the bridge. She came, as often as she could, to talk with him, to scold him for imagined masculine peccadilloes, and to smile upon him. And Bill went under.

He knew, as all men know under such conditions, that the small, sweet girl loved him as the little kitten loved him, just because he was big, and strong, and protective. And while he could not, under the circumstances, manifest his response to the girl, he took it out on the kitten when off duty; he would grab the little thing, bring it up to his lips, kiss it, and fondle it, and hug it—all of which brought response from the cat in the shape of scratch marks on Bill's face; for cats are not psychologists; they know nothing of the workings of the male human mind.

But still the cat was fond of Bill, as manifested by purrings and kittenish advances, and Bill was no less fond of the cat, in spite of the scratches on his face. He gave the small creature the caresses that he would have given the girl that he loved, had he have been allowed to. Yet there came a moment when he was perilously near to being

allowed to.

She joined him on the bridge, when his first mate was asleep, the guests aft in deck chairs, and the father and owner—below—in his room;—she had brought her fancy work—mysterious to Bill, for he saw nothing but scissors, needles, and an expanse of white cloth, all of which he knew nothing about.

There was a half gale of wind blowing; the awning was furled, the weather cloths stretched along the bridge railing, and the deck chairs of the guests placed in snug positions under the lee of the houses; there was a lively sea rolling, which prevented any great activity of mind or body in the guests, and no one seemed to care that the owner's daughter came to the bridge. Bill brought her a chair from his room, and incidentally aroused the kitten from sleep; the kitten purred, and, receiving only one pat and stroke, followed her big master to the door of the room. There she stood, looking out on the stormy sea, and, no doubt, jealous of the other kittenish creature in the mackintosh, whom Bill was seating in the chair.

The small fluffy lump of darkness saw her lord and master apparently petting another creature, and came out on the bridge, shivering with cold, yet animated by a purpose of protest. She crept up to the pair, out of sight of the man at the wheel in the pilot house, and

sprang on to Bill's shoulders, purring contentedly, and giving him a tentative dig of admonition with her sharp claws. Bill reached up, to pet her and bring her down-possibly to introduce her to the girl. But this was not permitted. Miss Mayhew screamed, stood up, and backed away, her eyes wide open in terror and dismay: then Bill. dimly understanding that the cat was an interloper, took it down, and tossed it toward the door of his room. Then the girl, uttering incoherent little cries of terror, flung herself into his arms. and the big fellow infolded her, kissing and comforting her, and promising protection from danger which he did not sense or understand. The man at the wheel was busy, the guests more or less asleep; no one saw but the slighted kit-Bill kissed the frightened little face again and again, and the outraged kitten acted. With one leap she reached Miss Mayhew's shoulders, and, spitting and purring her hatred and love. she separated the two. The girl, gasping and choking, shrank back, struck the small creature a blow that sent it flying three yards away, and went insane. She turned on Bill in a fury of rage, and, while she uttered no word that could not be printed in a modern novel, yet there was enough of invective, threat, and menace in her attitude to make the big man back away from her, shocked and horrified beyond conception. The girl followed him, waving her scissors, tightly clutched in her hand, her eyes blazing, her face distorted in furious rage, and her small body quivering with the emotions that racked it.

"You cowardly dog!" she screamed.
"You dared to play this trick on me?
If God will help me, I will kill you."

She lunged at Bill with the scissors, and he dodged. He could not speak in protest or argument; he was too surprised and shaken. All he could do was to run to the door of his room. She followed part way, and then paused, her eyes still blazing, and her face distorted; yet she seemed to be trying to control herself.

"Don't ever, while you live," she said

calmly, "speak to me again, or attempt

"Very well, Miss Mayhew," an-vered Bill gravely. "I'm sorry, but I swered Bill gravely.

do not understand."

He turned into his room, as the best place for him, and noticed the black kitten darting out. Then he heard a scream from the girl, and turned to look. She was making for the bridge stairs, her scissors still tightly clutched, and the wee, black cause of the trouble chasing her. Bill caught his pet, and shut it in with him, while he smoked, and thought, and deduced, with the logic of a poor man, on the neversolved problem—the inscrutability of women.

In half an hour he was aroused by a shout, and went on deck. His men were tumbling out of the forecastle; stewards, cooks, and guests were scrambling forward, and a glance down from the head of the steps showed Bill the cause. Miss Mayhew lay prone on the deck, the scissors still gripped in her small hand, but the points driven into her side, and a pool of blood drifting down to the scuppers from the wound. Bill jumped clear of every step, and, landing beside her, picked her up. She was unconscious. and her eyes were closed. It took an effort of strength, but he drew the scissors out of the wound, and looked helplessly into the face of the doctor.

"What happened?" asked the latter. "Well, never mind what happened. She has fallen down the stairs and wounded herself with her scissors. Carry her aft. We must stop this effusion of blood. Heavens"-he looked at the deck-"she has bled a quart al-

ready. Aft with her quickly."

Bill carried the limp and bleeding form back to the cabin, and, having lain it gently on the bed in her stateroom, was moved to go. He was sailing master; the agonized father was there, the doctor, a member of the family and acting the part; the doctor's wife, a motherly and practical old lady, and a group of quiet, gentlemanly, and questioning rivals, whom Bill had no love for, and who invited their own destruction by the looks they gave him. Bill went to the bridge, called his mate, then, capturing the steward on his way forward to the galley, ordered him to report, as he valued his life, on the condition of the sick girl. The steward promised, and Bill waited on the bridge.

The steward went aft, and Bill watched him come up on the run and race forward. Bill again cleared the bridge stairs at a jump, and met him.

"Dying, captain," gasped the stew-d. "Dying from loss of blood." ard.

Bill went aft—he never remembered whether he walked or ran-and bolted down the stairs, shoving aside the small Arsdale, the big Muggins, the athletic Parsons, and even the gentlemanly Elkins, all of them white in the face, as they hovered near the stateroom door, and burst into the room, where the grief-stricken father, the anxious doctor, and the weeping Mrs. Calkins hovered over the quiet, unconscious form on the bed. The rivals followed him in, but did not attempt to get between him and the girl. The doctor looked around at them, while Bill leaned over and raised the girl's head in the palm of his hand. He choked, but did not speak.

"Nothing but transfusion of blood will save her," said Doctor Calkins. "Who will volunteer?"

"I will," stuttered young Arsdale. "You won't do, young man," said the doctor coldly. "You're not big enough, and need all the blood you have for yourself."

"Then I'm the man," said Muggins, the author. "Heavens, what an experi-

ence! What a story I can make of it!"
"You won't do, sir," repeated the doctor to this aspirant. "Your blood is impregnated with alcohol, and Lord knows what. I would as soon inoculate her with vitriol." Mr. Muggins left the room.

Mr. Pearson drew back, very pale in the face, evidently impressed with the thought that he was expected to offer himself to the sacrifice; but no one seemed to notice, and Mr. Elkins, the editor, faced the doctor.

"I have mentioned to the captain," he said, "my wish to do something, be something, make something, before I die. I am a healthy man, Doctor Calkins, and I offer myself."

The doctor looked him over approv-

"It will take a full quart of your blood. You may not survive."

"Take it," said Elkins firmly. "I

will run the chance."

Bill looked up, dazed and shaking. He had dimly recognized the drift of the talk, but now grasped the fact in its entirety, that a man-another than himself-was ready to die for this girl that he loved. It was preposterous, unthinkable, and impossible. He laid the girl's head back on the pillow, and motioned Mr. Elkins out of the room. Mr. Elkins went quickly and quietly. There was that in Bill's face that induced him to obey the gesture.

Pearson and Arsdale followed as quickly, stumbling somewhat in their haste, and even the stern old father

drew away from Bill.

"Does she need my blood?" asked Bill grimly. "I've plenty to spare. Take it all."

"You are needed to command this

boat," said the doctor.

"I am not. My two mates can navigate. Get ready quickly, or she may

die while you're talking.

Bill threw off his coat and rolled up his sleeve, showing an arm as big as an ordinary leg. The doctor rushed for his instruments, and while he was gone the owner asked brokenly of Bill how it happened.

"I do not know, sir," he answered, resolved not to describe the scene to her disadvantage. "I did not see her fall.

I think nobody saw her fall."

"God grant that she lives!" said the old man, all the austerity gone from his face. "I can do nothing, willing as I am, for I am old and feeble; but you are young and strong. You see, there is much at stake beside my own grief and suffering. She is my daughter, and the real owner of this yacht, and every bond, and share, and mortgage

that I control. Should she die. I would die myself-from poverty and want, while her relatives would obtain control. Still," and the old man stiffened up, "why should I speak of this? She is my daughter. I love her, for she is all I have left. Save her life, and while I live I am at your command."

"The hell you say!" said Bill.

thought she was your ward."

"My daughter by my second wife," said the old gentleman, with dignity. "My first wife, with all her relations, is

still alive, and fighting me."

"I think," said Bill reflectively, "that I understand. Well," and here the doctor appeared with his appurtenances, "you don't love this little girl any more than I do, and I'll do my part."

"Lie down beside her quickly," or-

dered the doctor. Bill did so.

"Can you stand pain?" asked the doctor of Bill. "Or do you want an anæsthetic?"

"Go ahead," growled Bill, between

his teeth. "Work quickly."

"I am going to sever a vein in both your arms, and connect them by this tube. Miss Mayhew is unconscious, and will feel no pain. But you will."

"Go ahead," yelled Bill. "What do I care for pain? Use your surgical skill, and save her life, or, by God, I'll toss you overboard. Quickly, now. Go ahead, before she dies."

"I will," answered the doctor grim-

ly, as he picked up his lancet.

Bill felt pain; he felt that his arm was being torn from his shoulder, as the doctor severed a large vein, and dragged the upper end out from the bleeding wound. He gritted his teeth, however, and closed his eyes tightly, while the doctor ligatured the vein and bound its end around the tube; then, shivering in every muscle of his body, he waited while the same operation was performed on the arm of the girl. Then the ligatures were removed, and Bill slowly went to sleep, the pain and distress, love of the girl, and interest in life, leaving him as the somnolence increased.

He wakened a few years later, as he thought, lying in his own berth abaft the pilot house, his arm bound to his side, and the black kitten nestling upon his chest. He looked at the little creature, and an ungovernable hatred overcame him. He could barely lift his free arm, but with this arm and hand he brushed the kitten off to the floor. Then he tried to pull himself together. but did not succeed; things were obscure, he could not remember, and all he felt was hatred of the cat, now glaring at him from under the chart table. There was a nautical almanac in the berth, and Bill flung it at the cat; but she dodged, and ran out on deck. Then she came back in the arms of Miss Mayhew, or, rather, in one arm, for the right was strapped to her side, as was his left; she was not exactly rosy of face, still there was color in it, and a soft light in her eyes, and a sweet smile on her lips, that robbed Bill of his resentment toward the cat. fondled the small creature, and came toward his couch; then, bending over him, she deposited the kitten on his chest and kissed him on the lips. Bill choked and gasped.

"You musn't mind," she said, rosy now, "if I kiss you. The doctor told me. You gave me most of your blood, and I lived. I was well in a day."

Before Bill could formulate an an-

swer the father came in.

"Well," he said cheerfully, "you've waked up, have you? Good! We had our doubts about it; for it took three days. We're almost to Gibraltar, as the mate says."

"That's good," said Bill wearily, "but

-is Miss Mayhew all right?"

"Got a hole in her side," answered the father, "and a hole in her arm; but, tell me, you folks. Something happened, and I want to know.'

"It was all my fault, daddy," said the girl. "This little cat frightened me, and I think I went crazy again."

"I see," said the father, his face clouding. "I told you, Mr. Flanders, to have no cats on board. Why is this?"

"Why," said Bill, "I'm sorry now, of course, but I found the brute being tormented by a gang of toughs, and brought it with me. I never dreamed that there would be any unpleasant consequences."

"But I knew," said the owner warmly. "This little girl of mine was marked by her mother, who was frightened into insanity by a mad cat. She has gone crazy several times at the

sight of a cat."

"But not any more," said the smiling girl. "Come here, kitty, and let me love you." She picked up the kitten, and fondled it. Then the doctor appeared, and looked them all over with

a stern; scientific eye. The girl placed the kitten on Bill's chest, close to his chin, and smilingly bade him pat it. But Bill, with a furious, though not profane, exclamation, struck his former pet from him. The girl picked it up, and consoled it, looking down on Bill with mild disap-

"Please pardon me," he said weakly, "but I hate the thing. I cannot stand

"Don't worry, young man," said Doctor Calkins. "You'll come around all right, and be as merciful to dumb animals as you have been, while our little girl here is relieved from the obsession of her life. It has never before come into my experience, but I have read about it in my studies-transfusion of blood carries with it transference of psychic qualities. This girl, in taking into her veins some of your blood, has taken your love of cats-I know all about it, because I talked with the mess boy-and you, in giving your blood to her, took something of her obsession. But you will both get over it. Come, Mr. Mayhew, and leave these people alone with the cat."

They went out, and the girl sat beside the weak and helpless man, stroking his face and caressing him for an hour before he spoke a vital word.

"Say," he said, at last. "Tell me. what is your first name?"

"Kitty," she answered.





O those who do not understand French, all things are pure in café chansons. If the locale where they are sung is the right one, far from any

contact with that Paris made only for strangers, the atmosphere, the picture one gets of a life which the foreigner so rarely touches, go with them.

To know the real Paris in this aspect is to know the lower slopes of Montmartre, or to be one at heart with the Quartier Latin over the Seine. The Ambassadeurs, the Jardin de Paris, and all the rest of that ilk—overdone in text and illustration—are, in mid-travel season, foreign to France, except for the professionals on the stage.

They remind one of the Waldorf-Astoria in August, with out-of-town people largely assembled, keenly eying each other to get quite correct ideas of

New York fashions.

The Frenchman's degree of happiness appears graded to the length of time he can put off going home. Henry James caught the gist of it in that single sentence given the house agent anxious to rent: "Monsieur, it is as beautiful as a boulevard." He might have added: "Or as a café," and made the ideal of home complete.

The café phase of it begins only late, after the successfully ended clatter of tongues and plates leaves no further excuse for delay under awnings, or the clear blue night covering the sidewalks.

By eleven, La Lune Rousse, if things go well, grows sufficiently cheerful to gasp with delight at political satire in song and story, for which it is famed; the Chat Noir really awakes only when the clock has struck twelve; the Caveau des Innocents almost deserves its title until two in the morning. And so one may go down through the time-table of a heaven from which the suburbanite would seem eternally barred.

There are nooks where the night commences at a little past nine, places they seemed in the calm of their contrast almost like the meetings of early Christians, and where a Beethoven trio supplants the chanson, while smoke, rising in clouds, brings complete sense of content. One of these is the Concert-Rouge, in the Rue de Tournon, within call of the Luxembourg.

On the first night of my way there, mists from the Seine had turned the Louvre to silver in a blue-white haziness; underfoot the yellow reflections of lights on wet pavements made streaks of gold along its great courtyard.

The Rue de Tournon was a narrow chasm of silence when I reached the low, faded building at which I was the earliest to arrive. Presently a fat man tumbled out of a cab, and then, one by one, as the light of the Luxembourg clock grew brighter in settling darkness, the audience came. Gentle, refined-faced people, musical, some stamped with the mark of the pro-

fession. Poorly clad they were, but with the simple charm of a taste not interfered with in France, when sous

have to be carefully counted.

The concert room was deep and broad; in its centre was a stage with places for seventeen musicians, and a grand piano. Along the walls were the inevitable mirrors, without which the French mind cannot, perhaps, realize even heaven as properly furnished. On the back of each chair were a shelf and guard to hold the tall coffee glasses.

In a moment all had settled themselves into that intimate silence which comes only when those of an audience have long been used to each other. With the beginning of the music every man seemed oblivious to his neighbor; a day of toil had merged into a night of transcendent peace, or of dreams to which that music gave life almost tangible. Men bowed their heads in their hands; women looked with unseeing eyes beyond the four walls.

But in that moment the whole world held no richer group. It was Beethoven's Second Symphony that had made them so; Beethoven's Second Symphony, played by sixteen musicians, the seventeenth, a pianist, helping out the score. Every man of them was a First Prize pupil of the Paris Conservatoire; they played well. But to those used to tone masses, which Beethoven was not: to those used only to listen when this man or that conducted-what would it have meant? Perhaps a travesty. But I will only say this: To me there was never before such an audience.

I have long grown accustomed to see people wildly enthusiastic over a concert because of some crashing climax, some new and eccentric reading of a score; or go into transports over an idolized soloist. But there was an audience . But once away from political themes that remembered first and last the composer! It was the love that those people in the Concert-Rouge gave to Beethoven, a love that supplied all that was missing in performance, and made it transcendent and glorified. That is an audience before which an artist would glory to play; it would get the best that was in him.

From the Rue de Tournon to Noctambule, in the Rue Champollion, at midnight, is as a dash into space and landing on another planet. The street, dark and narrow, is shut in by massive buildings, almost medieval in their rude ruggedness, where one might expect a thrust of white steel from behind the thick shadows.

And then, a rush of lights, a fragment of song, as the big doors swung back, and I was in a place that a certain type of the degenerate sensation-hungry regard as amusement. Flaring pictures made daubs of crudity on the white walls: at the far end of the garish room, in the middle of a high-set stage, sat a large, comfortable, student-faced creature in front of the piano; sat with a stationary air, as if time had firmly rooted him there for all eternity. He played mechanically, one after another, in routine that awaited no ending, accompaniments to songs that only in the instance of the political lampoons were sung with raucous voices. In that respect Paris cafés make often strange contrast to New York vaudeville theatres, where ladies and gentlemen ambitiously vie with each other in showing how near the human voice can approach in effect unoiled machinery.

A miserable travesty of farce came between songs, the actors huddled together at one side of the stage, to allow unbroken view of the all-important pianist, their costumes makeshifts, belonging to no generation; a favorite entrance being by way of the front door with a rush and vociferous callings in the midst of the audience. Sometimes there came sparks of wit, such as doing a sum in addition with the result only noughts, to show what the sales of church property had brought the State. everything was elemental, childish; a Punch and Judy show would have seemed complex in comparison.

And the faces there? Not one of them expressed an atom of feeling, only longing to be amused. The type that enjoyed watching heads roll into a basket under the guillotine—a type still far from extinct.

The Boulevard Rochechouart, skirting Montmartre, again holds its own types—that stretch with its four rows of trees, its glare of cafés and restaurants, its chatter-filled sidewalks; and above them all the red-lighted arms of the Moulin Rouge, ceaselessly waving a satanic benediction.

The boulevard setting for this mass of humanity, that in its endless, conglomerate procession recalls Coney Island, is cheap and tawdry—shops, restaurants, cafés. But the whole world seems acquainted; smiles and a gay word everywhere. The work of the day is set so far behind, so shut out from all present thought, that one wonders whether to-morrow can ever bring repetition of a dull reality.

In their clientele La Lune Rousse, the Chat Noir, and Alexandre's, all in this section, are each as distinctly marked as are the different families of beetles. One could single out on the pavement the audiences of each by their faces. As truly as water will find its level. Paris types seek out their own

cafés.

The wildest place of them all is Alexandre's at midnight, with its rough crowd numbering some of that class called by the Parisians "Apaches," and who live up to their title. The interior is a degenerate medley of the kitchen beloved by old Flemish painters, and the laboratory of Doctor Faustus, as third-class opera scenery presents it.

Sausages, cabbages, onions hang in mildewed profusion from above the stage; the footlights are bottles filled with wilting greenery; on each table are bunches of blossoms, with a once fresh past now almost forgotten, in the necks of black bottles. On the stage an old witch pounds away on a piano melodies stolen from Sousa to elope with French words. When the refrain comes there is a wild burst of chorus, ringing and beautiful, as far as the men's voices go, the baritones having a brilliant tenor quality. At the far end of the room a man crashes out the rhythm on a bass drum, adding its din to that of the piano. In one corner of the stage a puppy is hopelessly yelping.

There is an inrush of unkempt men in the midst of it, announced at the top of his lungs by the master of ceremonies, wearing fanciful livery and a great metal chain as badge of office—announced by a title their appearance suggested, and greeted with general applause and laughter—a custom stolen from his neighbor up the street, the Chat Noir.

Another world, though, that Chat Noir, one so far removed that the distance dividing the two might be measured by a scale of an inch to a league. The fashionable vogue of the place has waned to the benefit of its survival. Its language to the bohemian eye is one of charm; its atmosphere of a kind that a literary man has, perhaps, always

longed for subconsciously.

The walls are so closely hung with portrait sketches of its beloved habitués that no space is left between frames. At the rear end is a low stage; chairs and tables are scattered about in an informal fashion that heightens the spirit of intimacy. Those of like tastes have dropped in casually, it may be for the song, sung in resonant baritone by the proprietor, and with a ringing refrain which every soul there catches up with familiar abandon-or it may be for the original poems recited by their authors, recited with an exquisite diction and sense of rhythm that elevate them in the ear to music. Some of these poets of the Chat Noir, with a fame spreading the length of the boulevards, have speaking voices as beautiful as their verses.

He is mainly of one type, longhaired, thin, indifferent to his dress, which seems to have grown on his lank figure; his eyes burn with a light that increases as his lines are unfolded; his hands would be the better for a closer friendship with water. But the charm of his manner, the serene self-respect, tinged with a subtle reserve, as he carries his badly printed poems for sale, in and out between the tables, confer a distinction on those paying the miserable fifty centimes he accepts for a transcript of his thoughts.

His real recompense after reciting is

a quick, rhythmic clapping of hands in unison, and following that a request from the proprietor, "Messieurs and mesdames, now a sigh of admiration!" to which every one there responds as he bests knows how. Then the poet modestly goes out by way of a back stair.

Sometimes a song follows, and, again, the young girl behind the desk will succeed him. Her white face, under heavy, dark hair, is lit up by brown, staring eyes. In her countenance there is not a vestige of expression; the words might be those of "Mary's Lamb." Bursts of laughter fail to arouse response from her in a single muscle. Supremely unmoved, she climbs back onto the stool. It has been one of those moments peculiarly French.

Of course, in a blank innocence, she has said one thing that meant quite another. And what else but that capacity would make French the choice of diplomats? When one takes the meaning one is intended to, the fault is one's own, and if one fails to grasp it, there is another meaning still left, as reward of virtue.

But the faces at the Chat Noir are of a kind strongly appealing. There is heart in them as well as intelligence; their stamp is that of the world, and of a bohemian brotherhood. Small wonder, for one may have been sitting shoulder to shoulder with men already placed in a niche, not only in the little world of the Chat Noir, but in that big one outside it, reaching beyond the confines of Paris. A man with camaraderie once in his veins is not likely to lose it because the high thing he has striven for finally comes to him.

Again, one's neighbor may have been a workman of Montmartre; he loves his Chat Noir for the same reason as does the studio woman near the piano, or the artist who, with half-closed eyelids, smokes cigarettes and absorbs the picture. The accolade of the real bohemia may be promiscuous, but it falls on its own.

La Lune Rousse up the street is a rich cousin to Noctambule; the political satires are keener, and the faces are cleverer, but as lacking in depth as the flat portraits of Catherine of Russia. There is in them only love of self and of life. They come to hear more of those things they know best. Pagan they are to the core.

The women are greedier for the risqué; some, very old, handsomely dressed, leer with joy; younger ones look frankly into their escorts' faces for confirmation of their delight. The programme, on its surface, is childish; its climax may begin with cardboard portrait-figures of celebrities, moved in single file by strings. But an oration accompanies them. And even to the fourth generation removed from the originals its contents would likely prove a source of family embarrassment.

Songs there are by old favorites, who rush in, and then away elsewhere to repeat them; again there are songs given mezzo voce, with perfect diction, and a concentration conveying knowledge that not a word should be missed, as all, grinning, agree.

One's French need not be so perfectly flexible as to grasp the jargon of slang, in itself a separate language, to get a series of studies, without words, more comprehensive of life as it is in its varying stages of soddenness, than the greatest of artists could convey truthfully.

At the end of a courtyard, off the Boulevard de Strasbourg, lies the oasis of the Concert-Touche. The orchestra there is larger and better than that of the Concert-Rouge, the audience higher in the scale of prosperity, but that intimate sympathy which comes with the simpler surroundings in the Rue de Tournon is less strong. After the symphony, though, with which the programme generally opens, and when the air is heavily smoke-wreathed, there come things that make the spirit of the two places identical; it may be a trio, by Beethoven, the slow movement played with an exquisite beauty; it may be the music of old France, by Rameau, and the rest, that one scarcely hears elsewhere; but the spirit of absolute sympathy with it makes itself felt from heart to heart.

Perhaps very many will tell you that the place where the worst people in Paris assemble is the Caveau des Innocents, where policemen in plain clothes are scattered about among groups lustily singing the refrains of chansons of love, of the passing regiment, and all the rest close in common to their lives. My own impressions did not bear this out.

It was two o'clock in the morning when I got there; to go earlier was useless, their night had but fairly begun. Passing through the brilliantly lighted café above, and down a steep stair, I stood under low arches of rough masonry, thick as those of a dungeon.

The place was crowded, every table to its limit. Seated on wooden benches or chairs, drawn close to each other to save every atom of space, were figures of many types, some picturesque, some commonplace. Slouchily clad, but generally staringly clean, they jostled shoulder to shoulder; men with black stocks à la Rostand, bowler hats set well back on their heads, mats of hair curling over their foreheads; men with white cotton shirts opened wide at the throat, weather-stained, ruggedly negligent; soldiers, artists, students, and men who, losing all, had dropped out of their world to find here a new one.

Girls there were: Mimis, replicas of the portrait that Murger painted in "La Vie de Bohême," Mimis with death written in capital letters on faces ghastly white under the asthmatical splutterings of lights; Carmens, bright-eyed, with heavy, glossy hair, waving low, a big bunch of flowers stuck to one side; even the cigarette was not missing. The men with them, deep-chested, vigorous, manly, one may search in vain for their counterparts, even remote ones, at the Maison Madrid, the Café Armenonville, where that other world,

the great one, goes.

It meant only the living out of that tragedy, old as the world: "It is not good for man to be alone." It meant to those Carmens and Mimis, after the day's toil is done, the alternative of climbing endless stairs to darkness and loneliness, or the blessed sympathy of human contact with lights and songs,

and one heart all her own. When that one is chosen she must be true to it, for they are very unfashionable, those people of the Caveau des Innocents: a knife

is their divorce court.

Jealousies, when they flame out there. are hotter than any fires in hell, but they burn straight, and guilty ones take the consequences without a murmur. It is the elemental conjugation of the verb To Love. Too much admiration for a girl, expressed by a rival even in his looks, and the intruder is answerable. Let a man be his friend, and another touch him to hurt, a permanent souvenir

will be the reward.

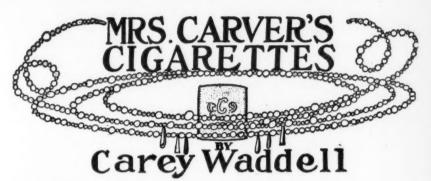
In the background of the strange picture, a singer stood in front of the piano; his tenor voice, vibrant with youth and life, rang out in the song; his face was white as of one who never sees sunshine; a scar ran the length of his right cheek to his throat; his white cotton shirt, open at the throat, was collarless. His black hair was thrust back from his face, which grew transfigured as his song progressed; it was not a ditty of double meaning, strong enough only to be heard through close attention; it could have held its own against Strauss orchestration.

He and his song were embodiments of all that was there, and I was glad to be there to hear them; the memory of all those sophisticated, manufactured chansons to which I had listened was swept away as a miasma before rushing wind-it was sincere, the one thing for which in that moment he had room in his heart. Only great artists carry that same impression. Where he came from, what he did, were questions, perhaps, he alone could have answered.

This was the hour, beyond the heart of the night, when like ghosts they came out of the confines encircling them, out of unescapable daylight realities, and lived until dawn sent them back again. Within bounds of their elemental, unwritten law, they were

there as brothers.

Every man at the long table where I had sat raised in his chair to shake hands good-by with me. In the world at the top of the stair it was dawn.





HAT do you think, my dear?"
Mrs. Carver, pale and gasping, plumped herself down on Mrs. Worden Wills' renaissance bedspread. "I've

been robbed!"

Mrs. Carver, it should be explained, was Mrs. Wills' confidant and chorus, their friendship being based, after the manner of women, on an utter uncongeniality of tastes and inharmony of

temperament.

The one, stout, furbelowed, and foolish, was a full-blown peony, while the other was as exquisite as trailing arbutus, exhaling the delicate fragrance and freshness of springtime. A Watteau shepherdess, all pink and white, one might have been tempted to call Mrs. Wills, were not Watteau shepherdesses so eternally insipid. She was, let us say, a Watteau shepherdess—with a dash of angostura.

Trying to follow her capricious wake, Mrs. Carver—heavily vulgar and lumbering of thought—was continually wallowing in the trough of mental seas; yet somehow, through sheer dogged fidelity and an indifference to hard knocks, she managed to keep afloat, and even within hailing distance of her

sprightly consort.

She strove to pattern herself in everything on Mrs. Wills' model—and copied the latter's gowns, hats, whims, and ways, regardless of effect. Only the lack of the requisite spouse, it was said, indeed—Mrs. Carver was a widow of fifteen years' standing—pre-

vented her from emulating the madcap impulse which had sent Mrs. Wills racing off to Reno, and procured her a divorce from the thoroughly estimable and affectionate Worden.

An expansive and flattering devotion was Mrs. Carver's, but it had its drawbacks. With it she also imposed upon her idol the burden of all her troubles.

"Good Annie," Mrs. Wills would sometimes sigh wearily. "I am convinced that she is a judgment sent upon me for my sins. In some former incarnation, no doubt, I was a mahout who brutally maltreated a kind and loving elephant, and now I have got to pay up for it."

To-day, however, she distinctly declined to yield the tribute befitting her gossip's tidings of affliction. Continued dropping will wear away a very monolith of sympathy, and she had already, since morning, condoled upon the departure of a cook, the death of a canary bird, and the discourtesy of a bill collector.

Furthermore, it was no new thing for Mrs. Carver's valuables to disappear, and thereby place her whole household under suspicion, until later they invariably turned up in some hiding place where she had, magpielike, herself secreted them. And last but not least, Mrs. Wills was at the moment under the ministrations of her maid, and fain to avoid any unguarded movement apt to disarrange the elaborate coiffure being built up from her thick, golden braids.

She waited, therefore, until another dozen or so of hairpins had been tucked into place; then, surveying the result in the glass, with birdlike turnings of her head from side to side, inquired languidly:

"Is this an accusation, Annie, or an

appeal for help?"

"An accusation?" Mrs. Carver's eyes rounded with bewilderment. "I didn't say anything, did I? Of course, I think I know who it was; but he—"

"He!" broke in Mrs. Wills, still concerned largely with her tresses. "I breathe easier—a little looser there at the back, don't you think, Marie?—Yes, Annic, that 'he'—it is faithful, old John, the butler, this time, I suppose—raises a tremendous weight from my shoulders. I remembered, dear, that I was over at your house this morning, and trembled lest even I might not be held guiltless."

Mrs. Carver gave a flounce like a resentful battleship, to the imminent peril of the gossamer counterpane.

"It's no time for chaffing, Cynthia," she protested indignantly, with a fresh burst of weeping. "They have taken

my solitaire earrings!"

Cynthia's flippancy vanished. This was really serious; for those solitaire earrings, barbaric enough for a Cripple Creek millionairess, were the apple of Mrs. Carver's eye, and it was hardly possible that they could have been lost or mislaid in any ordinary fashion.

"That will, do for the present, Marie," she hurriedly dismissed her maid; then turned sharply to the sniffing Ni-

obe upon the bed.

"Now, tell me all about it, Annie, and be quick; for every moment saved in an affair of this kind is a distinct gain. Or wait a second, dear; let me smoke while I am listening to you. I can think better, so!"

She found her cigarette case to be empty, though, and tossed it aside with

an impatient gesture.

"Give me one of yours." She reached toward Mrs. Carver's hand bag where it lay at the foot of the bed. "And better take one yourself, Annie. It will help to pull you together."

But her friend snatched the bag away with a swift cry of dissent.

"Here, I'll get what you want," she grumbled confusedly. "I—I have some things in there I don't want touched."

Nor did she offer the ornate, goldcrested box, when after some pawing through the contents of the bag she finally drew it forth; but carefully selected two cigarettes and passed one over in her fingers.

Mrs. Wills smiled amusedly at the revelation of frugality; for the other, as she knew, was not free from cer-

tain petty economies.

"Fie, fie, Annie!" she mocked. "Isn't my valuable counsel worth a retainer of more than one cigarette? Pass over that case, I tell you, and let me 'put my lips to it when so disposed."

But Mrs. Carver apprehensively thrust the cigarettes back into her bag,

and snapped the catch.

"No, no," she pleaded. "I'll give you all you want; but you fling things around so heedlessly, Cynthia, there's no knowing what might happen to my pretty case. Surely, I've lost enough for one day," her tears commencing to flow anew at the thought of the purloined earrings.

Cynthia also sobered at the reminder, and lighting her cigarette, dropped into an attitude of judicial attention.

"Now," she said, "unless you immediately quit that incoherent blubbering, and give me some sort of a straight story of this affair, I shall wash my hands of the whole matter, and let you find your earrings the best way you can."

Under this dire threat, Mrs. Carver hastened to control her agitation, and did at length set forth a fairly ordered narrative; but it must be confessed that what she told added but little to her

original statement.

All she knew was that she had taken the jewels out to clean them, and being summoned below stairs on a housekeeping mission, had left them lying on her dressing table. When she returned fifteen minutes later they were gone.

Mrs. Wills satisfied herself by a rigid

cross-examination that there was no chance of the vanished earrings having been stuffed inadvertently into some drawer or cubby-hole, and also that the servants could be safely left out of her calculations; then, after a few moments of reflection, she announced decisively:

"We will have to see Worden."

"Worden?" stammered Mrs. Carver. The proposition seemed to strike her somehow as-well, hardly proper. "Not your-your former husband?"

"Certainly. He has made splendidly good in that deputy police commis-sionership of his, and can advise us just what to do. I tell you, Annie, my getting a divorce from him, much as he objected to it, was the best thing that ever happened to Worden. He has shown New York pretty conclusively by this time, I guess, that he can be something more than a mere husband."

There was a note of wifely enthusiasm in Cynthia's tone which did not escape Mrs. Carver, and she stiffened up with a little gasp, forgetting for the moment even the loss of her earrings.

"Cynthia Wills"-she leveled an accusing forefinger-"I verily believe you are planning to go back to him!"

Mrs. Wills did not entirely deny the

aspersion.

"Ah!" She flicked the ashes lightly from her cigarette. "That is upon the knees of the gods. It will certainly not happen to-day, though, my dear. is an official, not a sentimental, visit that we are going to pay; you need entertain no fears of being dragged into a grand reconciliation scene.'

Mrs. Carver, however, was paying little heed; she was still staggered by the contingency she had unearthed.

"What do you suppose Sumner Cox will have to say?" she demanded breathlessly. "Everybody expects that, if you marry again, it will be to him, and you can't deny, Cynthia, that you have shown him a lot of encouragement. You brought him on here from Reno and got people to take him up, although you yourself admit that you know no more about him than does anybody else, and you've been going

everywhere with him. Honestly, my dear," with gloomy zest, "I should be frightened to death, if I were in your shoes. How can you tell what a Wild West cowboy like that may not do under the influence of jealousy? Why,

he might even shoot you."

Indeed, so apprehensive did she become over her tragic forebodings, that she evinced a marked reluctance to accompanying Mrs. Wills, lest haply they encounter a fusillade of bullets on the way; but Cynthia would listen to none of her timorous excuses, and, loading her into the motor, bore her off willynilly to the new police headquarters building on Centre Street.

The commissioner's face, which had lighted up with eager expectation at the sight of his wife, fell again as he spied her companion; but there was some return of interest, although of a different sort, when he learned the na-

ture of their errand.

"Ah," he commented, glancing at a slip which he picked up from his desk, "you are not without companions in misfortune, Mrs. Carver. This makes the third robbery reported from your block this morning, and all of them equally mysterious and inexplicable.'

"Three? In the block?" exclaimed

the two women in unison.

"Just so. Mrs. Porter is mourning a diamond pin, and Helen Kellogg her engagement ring. It looks very much as though my elusive friend, 'Diamond Sammy,' were once more at work along the Avenue."

"Diamond Sammy?" repeated Mrs.

Carver questioningly.

"Yes; 'Diamond Sammy' Cook, the shrewdest, slipperiest, most daring crook in all New York. For four months now I have been hard upon his heels, but somehow he always manages

to slip through my fingers.

"Cynthia doesn't believe in 'Diamond Sammy.'" He smiled quizzically at his wife's unmistakable sniff of disdain. "She considers him a 'Mrs. Harris,' a mere convenient myth employed to cover up the shortcomings of the department; but I fancy, in the face of to-day's developments, that even she

will have to admit he is a pretty tangible

personality."

"How do you make that out?" snapped Mrs. Wills, with ready challenge.

"Well"—Worden squared back in his chair a trifle didactically—"let us analyze these three robberies in the light

of their obvious connection.

"First, I want you to note," he continued, "that in each instance only diamonds were taken, a ruby necklace being left untouched at Mrs. Porter's, although it was in the same drawer and of considerably greater value than the stolen pin. This is a salient point; for every criminal has his specialty or sign manual, and the stealing of diamonds is Cook's. Indeed, so persistently does he disregard any lesser booty that the police have bestowed on him the added sobriquet of 'Ice Man.'"

"Marvelous!" Cynthia rolled her eyes, a burlesque Watson to his Sherlock Holmes. "Was ever more convincing logic? Diamonds were stolen; therefore 'Diamond Sammy' is the thief. Is that your argument?"

"Not entirely," his poise quite unruf-

"Not entirely," his poise quite unruffled by her raillery. "There are other facts to which I ascribe equal importance. Has it struck you, for instance, that although no suspicion can reasonably attach to the servants, the robbery was, nevertheless, clearly what we call an 'inside job'?"

"But how do you know that?"

"All the windows were found closed and locked," he read from the police report upon his slip; "neither the fire escapes nor roof traps had been used; there was no evidence of house-breaking; nor had any stranger gained admission in the guise of plumber or gas man.

"At least," he amended, turning to Mrs. Carver, "such were the conditions at Mrs. Porter's and Mr. Kellogg's, and I assume them to have been the same

with you?"

Mrs. Carver seeming to be in a brown study of some sort, however, Cynthia took it upon herself to answer.

"That is so," she nodded. "Old John,

her general factorum, went all over the house immediately after the robbery, and told her he simply couldn't figure any way for the rascals to have broken in."

But at this point Mrs. Carver emerged from her reverie, and addressed herself with frowning irrele-

vance to Worden.

"What I want to know, Mr. Wills," she demanded, "is how you can be so sure of the servants? For my part, I wouldn't trust any of them, and Mr. Carver in his lifetime always said the same. He had a valet once, I remember, who stayed with him for thirteen years as straight as a string, and then decamped one day with—"

"Ah," interposed the commissioner patiently, "but consider, my dear lady, that here we have three separate establishments looted in one morning and in exactly the same way. Rather too much of a coincidence, don't you think, to be charged up to dishonest help? Unless, indeed, you grant that larceny is contagious, and that a violent epidemic of it has broken out along your

block.

"No," he resumed, "this, as I say. is an affair where we may eliminate both the servants and the ordinary cracksman as factors. It called for a higher order of talent, and was the result of a well-arranged plot whereby these ladies, having been drawn away on the plausible summons of a confederate, the thief had opportunity to enter their boudoirs, and help himself to what he chose. I deduce, in short, from all the circumstances, that the man was admitted at the front door as a guest, and was also intimately enough acquainted with the lay of all three houses and the habits of their inmates to accomplish his purpose in the brief interval afforded him-in other words, that he either belongs to, or has managed to gain a footing in, good society, a theory which you will remember"—he glanced toward Cynthia-"I have always maintained in regard to 'Diamond Sammy,"

He paused a moment as though to let the significance of his reasoning sink in; then dropping the somewhat precise manner which had hitherto characterized him, inquired sharply of Mrs. Carver:

"Was Sumner Cox a caller at your house this morning?"

"Sumner Cox?" she faltered.
"Sumner Cox," repeated the comissioner. "Was he at your house this missioner. morning?

"Y-yes," reluctantly, "he was."

Cynthia, giving a little cry, leaned forward; but Worden stayed her from speaking with uplifted hand.

"Just a minute, please," he said. "I want to ask her the time of this visit."

Again Mrs. Carver yielded miserably

to the superior will,

"He came in with me," she whim-"I left him in the drawing room, while I went upstairs straighten out my jewel case, and when I looked for him again after the robbery he was gone."

"Cox was also a visitor, I understand," supplemented Worden dryly, "at both the Kellogg and Porter houses

this morning."

Then he leaned back in his chair with a little wave of the hand toward his wife, as though to say: "You may have the witness."

"Annie"—Cynthia's tone was one of icy reproof-"will you kindly tell me why you failed to mention this to me be-

fore?"

"Well," gulping convulsively, "he's such a-such a friend of yours, you know, and I didn't want you to think that I believed-I mean, I didn't want you to think-to thinkfloundered hopelessly.

"Ah!" Mrs. Wills caught a sudden ray of enlightenment. "So the 'he' you meant when you first spoke to me of this affair was Sumner, eh? You suspected him as the thief?"

Mrs. Carver nodded.

"But I don't believe so now, Cynthia," she pleaded tearfully. "I really don't. No matter what Mr. Wills says, I am sure it was the servants. Why, if it wasn't for my earrings being stolen, I suppose they'd be suspecting me, too; for I was at Clara Porter's and Helen

Kellogg's this morning, just as much as he was.

"Come!" Worden swung around in his chair. "This begins to grow interesting. You say you were with Cox at those two places this morning, Mrs. Carver?"

"Yes, I was. I met him at Clara's, and we went on together from there to Helen's, and then he walked home with me. How could he have stolen their pins and engagement rings, I'd like to know, when I was with him all the time?"

"All the time?" searchingly, "Are

you sure?"

"Of course, I am sure. Or, no, come to think of it, I did step up to Grandma Porter's room a minute while I was there, and at Kellogg's, I-

She caught her breath in misgiving. as she observed the variant expression on the faces of the commissioner and his wife, and realized the effect of her

admission.

"I am not going to stay here to be badgered any longer," she protested, with angry weeping. "It's not my fault, Cynthia, that I am persistently misunderstood and put in the wrong. I had heard of this 'third degree' business before. Didn't Clyde Fitch, or somebody, write a play about it—and how the police use it to shield the true criminals? But I never supposed Mr. Wills would descend to such methods. If he really wants to recover my earrings, let him go after the servants, as I tell him; but since I have small hope of that, and since I decline to submit further to this outrageous inquisition, I am going home. Call me a taxi, please.'

With one final glance of indignation at the discredited commissioner, she swept from the office, and Worden and

his wife were left alone.

For a moment they sat in silence; then Cynthia, tapping her foot on the

floor, broke out petulantly:

"For Heaven's sake, Worden, don't look so disgustingly like a cat that has just caught a mouse. You are completely wrong in this theory of yours, I assure you."

"So?" ironically. It could be noted,

though, that he hurriedly altered the rather vaunting cast of countenance to which she objected. "You agree with our astute friend that it must have been the servants, eh?"

"I am not a fool," shortly.

"Well," he bantered, "the only other shot I can see is to take up Mrs. Carver's own suggestion, and suspect her. Is that your solution, perhaps?"

Once more she started to shrug her shoulders, but paused halfway, a sudden questioning gleam in her eye.

"Annie!" she exclaimed. "Just wait a minute, Worden; let me think," her quick brain leaping from circumstance to circumstance like a chamois among the crags.

"I believe you have hit it!" She drew a long breath at length. "Yes," decisively, "it was she beyond a doubt."

Worden's lips twisted into a smile of

"'Passing the love of women!" he quoted cynically. "To save him, you'd sacrifice even your best friend, eh? By Jove, Cynthia, I never thought-

"No. she interrupted hotly, "it is not to save him, but to keep you from making a fool of yourself. And as for sac-rificing Annie Carver, if the facts are as I think, I am really doing her a kindness. This kind of thing kept up would soon make her a confirmed kleptomaniac."

"Oh," he sneered; "so that is the horn of the dilemma you have chosen? Kleptomania, indeed! I am afraid you will have a pretty hard time proving it."

"Well, I don't know." She gave him a mettlesome little nod. "Not so hard a time, perhaps, as you will have in proving that Sumner Cox is your redoubtable 'Diamond Sammy'; for every point that you made against Sumner is equally true of her, and a lot more besides. You don't deny, do you, that she could have taken those stones at Kelloggs' and Porters' just as easily as he?"

"Oh, no," impatiently. "I don't deny that she could have done it, nor do I deny that she could have swiped her own earrings in order to throw off suspicion, as I presume you will claim; but I do most emphatically deny that she would have done it. Why, the woman's whole life is a refutation of any such absurd conjecture, whereas this Deadwood Dick of yours, who comes from nobody knows where, and who, for aught any of us can say, has been a road agent or train robber, is a very

different proposition."
"Pouf!" Cynthia snapped her fingers. "That is just where you are mistaken. Poor Annie's life is anything but a refutation. Not that I insinuate she is a thief, you understand; but for years she has been hiding away her own belongings as a squirrel hides nuts, and I think the propensity has grown until now she has commenced on other people's. Annie is no longer young, you know, and they say a tendency of that sort always increases with age.

Worden threw her a glance of grudg-

ing admiration.

"I might have known," he muttered, "that you would make out a plausible case. But you're still a long way from proving to me. Cynthia, that it was the old lady, and not Cox, who took those diamonds."

"What would you consider proof?" "Well," he reflected, "if you could show me where she has secreted these jewels, as you contend, I would grant that you had at least a presumption in your favor."

"Cautious, aren't you? But I can do that very thing, or rather I could have done so this afternoon. She had them then-the stones and perhaps the twisted-up settings, too-poked up inside some cigarettes."

"How do you know?" demanded the

commissioner, with a start.

For answer, Cynthia described to him her friend's peculiar manœuvres with the hand bag, which at the time she had set down to Mrs. Carver's parsimony and nervousness over her loss, but which now, in the light of her new convictions, assumed a different guise.

"Of course," she confessed, "the diamonds may easily not be there now. It is characteristic of kleptomaniacs, I believe, to be forever seeking a new hiding place. But I would stake my head that she had them in those cigarettes this afternoon."

Worden's manner showed that he was more or less impressed; but, reluctant to abandon his own theory, he still professed a stubborn skepticism.

"Bosh!" he scoffed. "It's very ingenious, Cynthia, I'll admit; but it won't hold water. I still maintain that Cox was the thief all right."

"And I," she affirmed no less stoutly,

"that it was Annie Carver."

They faced each other for a space, both obstinately unvielding; then Worden's lips curved slowly into a rather bitter smile.

"Forever at issue, aren't we, Cynthia?" He fetched a sigh, "Strange, that you and I can never see anything in just the same light."

"We are going to see this affair in the same light, Worden; for I intend to

prove that I am right.'

"With Mrs. Carver's cigarettes?" he mocked. "I am afraid, my dear, you'll find, as you suggested, that when you come to examine them, the contraband will have gone. A very convenient loophole, that, by the way, to have left for yourself."

"I am seeking no loopholes. On the contrary, I'll risk my whole contention on one single, straightforward test, and let you be the judge of whether or not I have won. I will convince you by the evidence of your own eyes.

"Now, listen to my plan. To-morrow, if you agree, I will invite both Annie and Sumner Cox to my apartment, and then having laid out all the diamonds I possess as bait on my dressing table, will go out. Then you and I will watch together from a vacant apartment across the court, which commands a full view of my rooms, and see which one of the two yields to tempta-

"There," she challenged; "could I offer you a fairer proposal?"

Worden considered a moment, thoughtfully stroking his chin; then he

straightened up with a nod of decision. "By Jove, I'll take you on," he said; "and since you are making it a sporting proposition, what do you say to a little stake on the side to give it added interest?"

"A stake on the side? Of what sort?" "Well, if I win, suppose"-he dropped his playful tone, and spoke with husky eagerness—"suppose, Cynthia, you agree to come back to me?"

Anxiously watching her face, he saw that she was hesitating, and took an ardent step toward her. But she quickly raised her hand.

"Ah," she interposed, "but what if I

"Oh, in that case," he laughed jubilantly, "I will agree to come back to

He had gained possession of her hand by this time, and to his delighted wonder she was not drawing it away.

"Cynthia," he whispered thrillingly, "do you really mean-?"

But she slipped under the arm with which he would have clasped her, and by a quick movement gained the doorway.

"Not yet, Worden." She paused on the threshold with a tantalizing smile. "Not until our wager is decided." she was gone.

The following afternoon, the com-

missioner and his wife, from their post of observation in the vacant apartment. watched narrowly the windows belonging to Mrs. Wills across the court.

They knew that Mrs. Carver was over the way; for listening down the hallway they had heard the suave Marie admit her and repeat Cynthia's guileful message, that she was to wait half an hour, and then if her hostess did not return, to come on to the Waldorf. Also, they could catch glimpses of a portly figure moving somewhat restlessly about from room to room.

At last she appeared at the door of the dressing room, and halted with dilating eyes at the sight of the glittering display upon the table.

'How careless of Cynthia!" One could almost hear the words, so ex-

pressive was her attitude.

For a full minute, she stood, her gaze riveted on the jewels, seemingly fascinated by their shimmer; then, raising her head, glanced furtively about, and

advanced slowly step by step, as though under a compelling spell, toward them.

When she reached the table, they saw her open the bag at her side, and quickly draw forth her cigarette case.

"Ah!" breathed Cynthia sharply,

gripping at Worden's arm.

But instead of appropriating any of her friend's ornaments, Mrs. Carver, ripping open a cigarette, brought to light a narrow brooch, set with diamonds, and proceeded to fasten it at her throat.

"It is her own," Cynthia whispered, in answer to Worden's inquiring glance. "Ouite the ugliest thing that was ever put together, but she has always prized it, second only to those impossible ear-

rings."

The brooch in place, its owner, with a satisfied glance or two at herself in the mirror, turned her attention once more to the scintillating snare upon the table, seeming to debate with herself what to take, as she fingered one after another of the gems.

Across the court her every movement was followed with tensest excitement; but just when it seemed as though she must at last make a selection, a little ormoly clock upon the wall of Cynthia's dressing room chimed out three silvery

strokes.

Mrs. Carver, arrested at the sound, glanced up, noted apparently that her period of waiting had expired, and with only a hesitant look or so at the booty she was leaving, hurried away.

"Confound that clock!" Mrs. Wills voiced her chagrin. "The minute I get my hands on it, I shall throw it out of the window. And if you dare to exult over me, Worden, I shall send you after it!"

He had scant time to gloat, though, even if he had been so ungenerously inclined; for she had hardly finished speaking before they heard the doorbell ring again across the court, and a moment later could discern Cox's tall form in Cynthia's parlor.

The Westerner did not consume time like Mrs. Carver in roving from room to room, but almost immediately approached the trap. Crossing the floor, his eve was caught through the open doorway by the sparkle from the dressing room, and he stepped hastily inside.

There he rested his two hands on the table and leaned over the assortment as though making an inventory; then, straightening up, with a rather enigmatic smile, he penciled a brief note which he stuck into a corner of the looking-glass, and left the apartment.

"He smelled a mouse," Worden growled his disappointment. "I might have know a wary, old hand like that would never fall for so palpable a trick. Come on, my dear; let us be getting out of here. We have both failed, and we

might as well-

A half-stifled exclamation from Cynthia interrupted him, though, and following her startled gaze, he looked again across the court. The other door to the dressing room stood open, and through it came stealing the trim, blackfrocked figure of Marie, the maid.

Gliding swiftly across the floor, she snatched up a valuable diamond pin in the shape of a star, and dropping it into the pocket of her apron, whisked back

again out of sight.

Not a word passed between Mr. and Mrs. Wills-there was no necessity for speech-but with a simultaneous impulse they dashed from their retreat, and sped along the corridor to Cynthia's apartment.

She had her pass-key out as they reached the door, and would have inserted it; but Worden restrained her with a gesture, and instead pressed his

finger to the bell,

A moment passed, and then Marie, a slight flush upon her cheek, but otherwise unruffled and demure, stood at the portal. Her eyes widened at the unexpected sight of her mistress; but before she could turn, Worden had reached inside, gripped her by the arm, and dipping his hand into her pocket triumphantly held up the diamond star.

Overwhelmed by the exposure of her guilt, she burst into tears, and groveling at Cynthia's feet, poured forth a flood of incoherent French and English. of which about all that could be distinguished was execration of "zat cochon John."

"John?" inquired Mrs. Wills keenly.

"What John?"

"Meesus Carvair's John, madame. I would nevair 'ave done sooch t'ings, eef eet 'ad not been for 'im. He ees at ze bottom of eet all."

"Mrs. Carver's John at the bottom of it all?" frowned Worden, "What do

you mean?"

"Eet ees true, m'sieu; he is a bad man, a devil. He arrange wiz all ze servants at 'ouses where Meestair Cox veesit, to steal at any chance zey get after Meestair Cox been around, 'Take only diamonds,' 'e say, 'an' nevair except after Meestair Cox been around. Zen you will nevair be suspect'; for Meestair Wills, ze old fat'ead, 'e t'inks Cox ees "Diamond Sammy." Zat ees w'at he say, m'sieu, an' he coax us all to Yestairday he himself steal Meesus Carvair's earrings, an' Julie at Mees Kellogg's, an' Thomas at Meesus Portair's steal a pin an' ring. Meesus Carvair, she tell John zat she t'ink it was ze servants, but he tell us zat cuts no ice, nobody will pay attention to w'at she sav."

Cynthia turned to Worden with an

expressive glance.

"And the wise are taken in their own craftiness," she murmured; "the coun-

sel of fools is exalted."

"It would seem so," he admitted grimly; "and yet-and yet I cannot quite explain the peculiar actions of those two this afternoon. Send this girl to her room, Cynthia, and let us have a look at the note Cox left in your mirror."

There was little to be gathered from the three-line scrawl they found,

though; all it said was:

Sort of careless, aren't you? If I was "Diamond Sammy," think what a haul I could make!

"See," exclaimed Worden tenaciously; "it's just as I said. He sized the thing up as a lure, and side-stepped. For all the responsibility of the servants in these recent cases, I still believe that-"

"Nonsense!" demurred Cynthia. "Can't you see he is merely taking a fling at your baseless suspicions of him? Why, if it comes to that, there are a hundred better reasons for distrusting Annie. If ever in my life I saw cupidity, it was in her attitude while she was leaning over that table."

But while they were squabbling over their differing conclusions, Mrs. Carver, hot and breathless as usual, material-

ized in person.

"Ah, here you are," she pantingly chided Cynthia. "I didn't wait for you at the Waldorf, my dear; for when I was here before, I found your jewelry all out in plain view, and I got so wor-ried thinking about it that I decided to come back and put it away for you."

"In your cigarette case, perhaps?"

suggested Cynthia pointedly.

"In my cigarette case!" Mrs. Carver's jaw dropped and her eyes goggled fishily. "Now, how did you ever find that out? After the loss of my earrings, I hit upon that scheme to save some of my best things, but I was so determined no one should know that I didn't even tell you, my dear. How you guessed it is more than I——"

She paused in amazement; for Worden, rushing over to her, had seized both her hands and was wringing them

ecstatically.

"No one could reasonably doubt that explanation, Cynthia." He turned to his wife. "I think you lose the wager."

But the mood of surrender was not on her to-day.

"Lose?" she retorted. "Not at all. It is plainly a draw."

"Then," queried Mrs. Carver, dimly comprehending, "you are not going back to him, after all, my dear?"

But Mrs. Wills, born coquette that she was, refused to commit herself.

"That," said she, "as I told you before, Annie, is on the knees of the gods. But"—she flashed a reassuring smile at the dejected commissioner—"I'm free to confess that their knees are getting a trifle wobbly."





RISCILLA sat dreaming over the fire in her bedroom, surrounded by heaps of finery. Dainty frocks were outspread upon couch and bed,

lace petticoats, in a foam of softness, showed between their tissue-paper wrappings, while a trim array of little, high-heeled shoes in satin, and bronze, and gold stood in a row close by.

The room was a riot of delicious color, the firelight glimmering upon sheen of satin and the soft depths of a blue velvet theatre wrap, while from the head of the couch close by hung the gauzy lengths of a pink-and-silver scarf which sent out pale, opalescent hues as the light fell upon it.

Priscilla sat up, pushed the bronzebrown masses of hair from her eyes, and looked about her. For the first time for weeks she found herself, in her waking hours, quite alone. All the afternoon she had held a reception of her girlhood's friends, and had listened, with some natural triumph it must be owned, to their admiring and halfenvious comments upon the beauty of her trousseau.

Priscilla's hazel eyes, with a certain hard brightness in their depths, traveled now from bed to couch and back again, taking in slowly, one by one, the beautiful array destined for her future donning.

"I can hardly believe that I am I," she said to herself, with a catch in her voice. "Think of me, Priscilla Ives, owning all this. I, who have longed for pretty things all my life, who have had

to wear detestable hats, shabby gowns
—" She drew a long breath. "Why,
they never even saw I was pretty until
John came along and found me so."

She sprang to her feet, and went over to the long mirror, examining her reflection with curiosity rather than vanity. She was studying herself under these new, strange conditions—the hitherto insignificant girl who, by her engagement to a rich man, had sprung suddenly into prominence in the society she and her mother frequented.

She was only twenty, and there had been an intoxication in the thought that on her return from her travels with John she might ruffle it with the best, set the fashions, take precedence where hitherto she had been accustomed to a place very much in the rear.

Little wonder that this magical change in her circumstances should have borne her along on a flood tide of ever-varying emotions.

She had been allowed no time for thought. Her mother, worldly-wise to the finger tips, saw to that. Priscilla found herself loved, and wooed, and betrothed in the rapid, almost breathless, fashion characteristic of John Herrick, who, in love, war, and business, conducted his affairs with a spirit that swept all things along in the way he wished them to go. Priscilla, half afraid of him as she was, and wholly ignorant of anything but the outward man, could hardly have failed to be flattered by his tempestuous passion.

He had fallen in love with her at first sight. By some strange freak of

fate, the man who had traveled all over the world had found his ideal in a little, shy, brown-haired girl with appealing eyes. She had filled the recess in his obdurate heart untenanted all the years of his early manhood, and in love, as in everything else, John's dominating personality had carried all before him. Priscilla found everything settled without her. Mother and lover had fixed the date of the wedding, the length and place of the honeymoon, and they had only laughed at her when she had pleaded for longer freedom. She had hardly dared to protest. It was all so different from her dreams, and as yet she had had no time to get her thoughts into focus. After being dominated by her mother all these years, she was to pass into the keeping of a still more masterful nature.

And now in the silence of her room, surrounded by finery that looked like pale wraiths of herself, the reaction set in, and, tired out bodily with the triumphs of the afternoon, Priscilla found her brain clear for connected

thought.

She leaned back in her chair suddenly depressed, twisting absent-mindedly the betrothal ring upon her finger. The light sent out crisp sparkles from the rubies and diamonds, a restless fire that brought to mind her lover's dominating presence. Priscilla placed her hand upon her knee and regarded the ring with half-fascinated eyes. Then, suddenly, a feeling that had been latent for days surged up within her, a vague resentment that with every moment gathered force, until it swept her resistlessly toward a clearer knowledge of herself. It was the human soul in her that struggled to be free, to be at liberty to choose her own life, to rise above the trammels imposed by worldly advantage.

Ever since the day she had been handed on by one tyrannous owner to another the seed of resentment had taken root and expanded, until now, within a short time of her wedding day, it broke bounds and filled her being with wholly unexpected forces.

Priscilla's face grew very tense and white. She swayed to and fro in her

place, looking into the red heart of the fire, torn by a curious maze of feeling. She had awakened at last to her womanhood's birthright of independence, of free action. She would no longer be treated as a human chattel, without a voice in her own future.

With a swift movement she took the ring from her finger and placed it on the little table near; then sat motionless for a long time looking down at the

hand where it had been.

Across her consciousness came the memory of John's face as he placed the ring on her finger. A swift pang shot through her heart; it was pity, though she did not know it.

"He cares a great deal," she said to herself, "but I have nothing to give him in return—nothing—not even a little love. He only makes me afraid. I am glad when the door closes and he is gone. I can't—I can't spend all the rest of my life with him. It is impossible."

For the first time she realized her own capacity for passion; a storm of sobs shook her, though there were no tears in her eyes. In a new strange courage she went across the room and placed in its satin-lined case the ring she never meant to wear again. Then, mechanically, she began to put away the multitudinous array lying about on bed, and couch, and chairs. smoothed the satin and velvet with lingering fingers. She loved soft raiment and beautiful surroundings, and she was giving them all up in order to keep her self-respect. She was tired of being a lay figure. All these weeks, though she did not know it, her character had been forming. It had needed John's coming to make her see life from an independent standpoint-John, with whom she could never expect to call her soul her own. It would not be easy to face her mother and John.

All the finery had been put out of sight, and she had changed into one of her shabbiest evening frocks before any one came to disturb her solitude. She has chosen her shabbiest in order that she might put to the test her newfound independence. It was very dif-

ferent from the shimmering pink gown John loved to see her in. Her eyes were heavy, and her face very pale, as she looked at herself in the glass. Her beauty seemed to have faded away suddenly. She had just finished a letter to John, telling him in a few brief words that she did not mean to marry him, when a knock came at the door. Her mother entered hurriedly—so hurriedly and with a manner so unlike her customary demeanor, that Priscilla gazed at her in amazement. In her hand were two or three packages, one of which dropped at the girl's feet.

"More wedding presents!" Mrs. Ives spoke with irritation rather than triumph. "And, oh, Priscilla, such a

tragedy, my poor child!"

"A gift broken in transit?" There was something new in Priscilla's voice which pierced even her mother's entire unconsciousness. "What does it matter? Mother, let me tell you now this moment. I am not going to marry John. I have just written to tell him so."

The words came in a torrent; she turned away to await the wrath that would fall on her head. Mrs. Ives sank

into the nearest chair.

"Then you have heard?" she exclaimed. "You sensible girl to take it like this. I was so afraid I might find it difficult to persuade you to break it off. Girls are sometimes so absurdly romantic, but you are not, thank Heaven!"

Priscilla turned to look at the speaker, absolutely dumfounded by what she

heard.

"I am sorry for John, of course," went on Mrs. Ives complacently. "Generous soul! He will feel it more than most men—"

Priscilla came nearer. The hand so lately denuded of John's ring trembled

at her side.

"What do you mean?" she asked.
"Has anything happened to John?"
Mrs. Ives looked at her in astonish-

ment.

"Then you have not heard? Yet you say you have written——" Her eyes traveled to the square envelope contain-

ing John's dismissal. "How strange you look, Priscilla---"

"Never mind me. What about

John?"

"He is ruined, poor dear, absolutely ruined. The account of the bank failure is in the evening edition. How thankful I am that it did not happen a few weeks later. A most fortunate thing for you, dear. John without his money would not be altogether desirable, would he?"

The heartlessness of the remark struck upon Priscilla like a blow. She stooped and picked up the wedding gift that had fallen from her mother's hold, and placed the package unopened on a distant table. When she turned round

again Mrs. Ives had gone.

Half an hour later, when the dinner bell rang, Priscilla roused herself from

her thoughts.

"I can't possibly send the letter now," she said to herself, as she went from the room; "it would be cruel. I must wait and think—"

A new strange sympathy attached itself to her thoughts of John. Her mother's remark had roused a passionate sense of protest and shame. Mrs. Ives had been willing enough to take the favors John heaped on her—their number Priscilla never knew—but she was quite ready now to speak of him with condescending pity.

Priscilla found it so insupportable that she retired early to her room. The thought of the letter to John occurred to her, and she went to the table where she had placed it. It was not to be found. She searched high and low;

then went downstairs again,

"Your letter to John?" queried Mrs. Ives. "Why, yes, dear, I took it away with me and sent it to the post with one from myself to him. They were just in time for the last clearance of the box."

She returned to her novel as if there were nothing more to be said, and Priscilla mounted the stairs again to her room. John would not dream it was written before she knew of his losses, would never guess all the stress

of feeling that had gone to her renouncement of his claims upon her.

Through the long hours of the night she lay awake thinking of John and his altered circumstances, seeing his eves as he read her note, seeing his clear-cut, determined face harden at the thought of her. John might be masterful, but she could never imagine him doing a petty thing like that to a fellow creature who was down. It had always rankled in her that he had no great opinion of women where justice and keeping faith were concerned, and now she had strengthened his disbelief. The knowledge brought an ache to her heart that was like a physical pain. She tossed and turned, seeing John's face everywhere in the darkness, and only fell asleep at dawn to see it again in her dreams. She found herself wondering in what way his masterful pride would take his reverses. He was so unused to the pity of his fellow mortals, many, no doubt, would be glad to see him humbled in the dust. She slept late, and awoke to find a letter on her breakfast trav sent by special messenger. Written in John's firm, clear handwriting, it was very brief, with neither form of address nor signature.

"Your letter has just reached me" it ran—"and I quite understand."

That was all. The words seemed to detach themselves from their background of white paper and fling themselves at her reproachfully. She turned her face and buried it deep in the pillows, while the ache at her heart grew more intolerable every moment. Suddenly she sprang up in bed, her face quivering.

"I cannot bear it!" she said wildly. "I will not have him think that of me. What shall I do? What shall I do? I want so desperately to explain, and he will never let me; he is so strong that he will just drop me out of his life like some contemptible thing, and now—I

don't want to go."

A sense of sharp bewilderment rushed over her. Only last night she had been willing enough, but now, in a passion of pity for him, she wanted at least to explain that it was not the loss of his money that had impelled her to break faith with him.

She dressed hurriedly, putting on her outdoor garb, the shabby hat and coat in which he had first seen her. Into her pocket she put the case with her engagement ring. She slipped from the house unseen, and at the end of the road hailed a cab, giving the address of John's chambers. She hardly hoped to find him, but she could at least write a note explaining something of her reason. She had been there several times, with her mother, and John's elderly manservant knew her quite well.

His master had just gone out, he told her, and would not return until evening; but he readily acceded to her request that she might write a note.

He saw that she had everything essential for letter writing, and then went out of the room, leaving the door slightly ajar. She was glad to be alone, to have a little breathing space in which to compose a letter that was very, very difficult to write.

The other note—a few cold words with a sting in them—had flowed readily enough from her pen. But to explain, to impress the truth upon him now was a harder matter to face. She threw off her hat and gloves, and the sunlight, stealing in at the window near the writing table, made a bronze glory of her hair.

With John's penholder in her hand, she looked round John's beautiful, stately room, and wondered how he would be able to give it all up-the pictures, the bronzes, few but the best of their kind, the well-lined bookshelves with the mellow volumes John had collected with such jealous care. There was none of John's restless dominating self about his room; perhaps here he kept another personality, one she had never known. And as she sat there perplexedly, chin on palm, her hazel eves holding a vague shadow of pain, John Herrick came quietly into the room and stood looking at her.

All his wounded pride and anger ebbed away at the sight of her sitting there, her brown head outlined in a halo of sunshine like a saint. Only his love for her remained, sweeping over him with intolerable pain and longing. There was a dangerous sweetness in her presence there. She seemed so completely one with the beauty of her

surroundings.

The next moment she turned her head, and saw him looking down at her from his great height, with his mouth set grimly and his eyes frowning under heavy brows. She stole a second frightened look at him, and then fixed her eyes immovably on her left hand as it lay on the writing table. She felt tongue-tied. A throbbing in her throat made speech impossible. She looked such a little thing as she sat there, too small to deal such blows at a man's happiness. John clenched his hands, and walked a little farther away for fear he might be tempted to go nearer.

The silence grew and grew until it seemed to Priscilla that time itself must be standing still. She summoned courage to look at him again, and found him regarding her with eyes in which she surprised a glance that puzzled her, a look of wounded love that brought her to her feet with a little cry. All her fear of him fell away. She stretched out her hands with a swift gesture of appeal. Her eyes brimmed over and blinded her as she groped her way toward where he stood. Then John's hand came out of the mists and she found herself sitting in his big leather easy-chair near the hearth.

She buried her face against the comfortable wide arm, and there was a momentary pause, broken by John's voice,

hoarse and strained:

"For God's sake don't look so afraid of me, child! It—it—hurts—"

Priscilla conquered her tears and sat erect. She realized that she would have need of all her courage to make him believe and understand.

There was a skeptical vein in him that had often jarred upon her; but then, she had really seen only one side, and not the best, of John's character. He stood leaning against the mantelshelf, his face half averted, looking down into the fire. She could see only the outline of his clean-cut, determined

chin. He did not mean to help her out in her explanation, that was evident. Perhaps the atmosphere of the room put courage into her, for in a moment she dried her eyes and looked up at him.

"I am so afraid that you will not understand, or perhaps believe me when I try to explain," she said in a low tone, "and that makes it so diffi-

cult "

"I shall believe, at all events," remarked John coldly, "and as to understanding, did I not tell you that I fully understood? Even if your note had not been enough, your mother's would have left me no room for doubt. It is rather bitter when a man finds that his altered circumstances mean so much to the woman he is to marry, that he and his love count for nothing."

Priscilla started under the sting of his words. Her eyes shone, and the

color came back to her face.

"I will make you understand," she said, and the tone of her voice caused John to turn and look at her in amazement. "You shall not refuse to hear me. If I had not been so afraid of you, so in subjection all my life, matters might have been very different between us. I seem to have changed in a day. I am tired of having my life ordered for me. It is my own life, after all."

She was transfigured from the little, quiet girl he knew to a woman whose soul showed through the radiance of her face. Then, in an instant, the glory died away, leaving her very white and

tired.

John felt a sudden rush of protectiveness. If she had never known him, neither had he known her, or the strength of womanhood lying dormant in her nature. He drew nearer, and, stooping, took her little, bare hand in his own, wincing a degree as he noticed for the first time the finger bare of his ring. Priscilla held on to his hand as a drowning woman clings to a rescuer who keeps the troubled waters from closing over her.

"If you will only listen and try to un-

derstand," she said, with a sob.

"I mean to understand," said John very gently, drawing a chair near her own, and still holding the small fingers

in his comforting palm.

And then, falteringly at first, she told him just how she had felt the previous day, about her marriage, about her new-found independence and self-respect, of how completely the giving was on his side, that she had not even a little love to offer him in return.

He never interrupted her, never uttered a word; but when she said that, his hand vibrated a little as it held her own. She kept nothing back; the words came out in a torrent, and John began to understand. He saw his own shortcomings as a lover very clearly, and for the first time. Might and passion were not enough to offer a woman; she must have tenderness and sympathy as well.

He felt an unwonted sense of humility as he listened, but there and then he resolved to make a fight for his future in love, just as he meant to make it in affairs. He had suffered reverses in both, but he had no intention that they should dominate him. Priscilla, looking up, met his eyes, and something in their expression caused a great wave of relief to pass over her.

"Then we can be friends, after all,

just good friends, and nothing more?"
"No," said John very decidedly, loosening his hold of the small fingers and rising to his feet. "Friends perhaps, but something more, Priscilla, or I must go straight out of your life today. Do you wish it? Would my reverses in money matters be too severe

for you to face the future with me? That is, of course, if you loved me."

Priscilla's eyes were downcast.
"If I loved a man no reverses would matter," she said in a low tone. "Ever since I heard that you had lost your money, I felt differently toward you, and now you yourself are changed."

John, as a dazzling light swept over him, took her by both hands, and drew her from her chair to stand before him.

Priscilla did not glance up.

"A change for the better?" he asked.
"Ah, you are altogether different!"
She spoke with a catch in her voice. "I

am not afraid of you now."

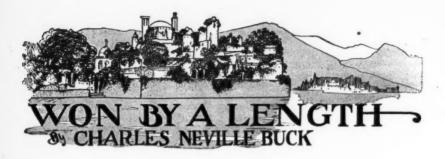
"And, please God, you never shall have cause to be again," said John fervently. "Will you marry me, Priscilla, when I can get enough money together for us to live on? Would you be afraid to marry a poor man who loves you, and could you give him some love in return?"

"I believe I love you now," said Priscilla simply, clinging to him as he kissed her. "I must have loved you all the time, though I did not know it. How glad I am that the money went. We should never have known one another as we do now if you had not become a poor man."

He stooped and kissed her again with a tenderness new in her knowledge

of him. Then he smiled a little.
"But I am still quite reasonably well-to-do, Priscilla. I never put all my money into one concern. There is still something left for comforts, and for a few pretty frocks for my wife if she cares to have them."







E was tall and aggressively British, from the black silk tassel on his red fez to the battered puttees and brown boots that had once come out

of Bond Street.

Few pleasure craft call at Constantinople. The sight of an Anglo-Saxon flag—even though it be Stars and Stripes instead of St. George's Cross—fluttering over a smart steam yacht, its folds outlined against the walls of the Yildiz Kiosk, might reasonably enough hold the gaze of the exiled Anglo-Saxon. Yet the scowling eyes of the Englishman, as he stared at the anchored *Isis*, bespoke furtiveness rather than curiosity.

"If you had not, as usual, been so damned late"—he turned with a gesture of raw impatience to the heavy-faced Osmanli at his side—"I could have pointed them out to you on Galata Bridge. As it is, they have re-

turned to the yacht.'

"May Heaven never again thwart your wish with delay, Martin Effendi." The Turk spoke placidly, his oily voice soft as a benediction. "I was delayed by pigs, and sons of pigs! Your annoyance is my desolating sorrow, yet"—he waved his hand with a bland gesture—"I am but the servant of his majesty the sultan—whom Allah preserve—and the official is frequently detained."

"What is done, is done. Bismillah! No matter!" The Englishman curbed his annoyance and spoke as one resigned. "What now remains is this:

We must see them, and you must learn to recognize them. You understand?" The other bowed in unperturbed as-

sent

"All Europeans," he suggested, "dine at the Pera Palace Hotel; it is the

Mecca of their hunger."

To the white man's voice returned the ring of asperity. "And at the Pera Palace we shall not only see but be seen. Likewise, unless we have a care in this enterprise, we shall not only eat but be eaten. A man may stare at whom he chooses on Galata Bridge."

"When I dine in a public place"—the Osmanli smiled cunningly from the depths of small, piglike eyes—"I shield myself behind a screen. Thus may I

observe unobserved."

The sun had set, but the yellow afterglow still lingered in the sky behind Stamboul as the two men stood looking across Galata Bridge, where their quarry had escaped them, and over the

Golden Horn.

A pyramid of domes, flanked by a pair of slender minarets, daintily proclaimed the Mosque of Yeni Djami against the fading amber. On Galata Bridge itself, the day-long tide of medleyed life was thinning. Where there had been an eddying current of turbans and tarbooshes, bespeaking all the tribes and styles that foregather at the meeting of two continents and two seas, there were now only the belated few.

To the jaded imaginations of Martin Effendi and his companion, Abdul Said Bey, the falling of night over the quadruple city, smothering more than a million souls under a single blanket of blackness, made no appeal. They were

watching a yacht.

Behind the two men, garish lights flared up in the water-front cafés, where natives sat smoking their nargilehs, and foreign sailormen played pool and drank Scotch whisky.

At length Martin held up the dial of his watch to the uncertain light.

"I must be off," he announced. "Jusseret is waiting at the Pera Palace, Don't fail us at seven-thirty."

The tireless features of Abdul Said Bey once more shaped themselves into a deliberate smile.

"Of a surety, effendi. May you find

favor in the sight of Allah.'

For a moment the piglike eyes followed the well-knit figure of the Englishman as it wheeled and went swinging along the street. Then the Turk turned and lost himself in the dark-

At the same moment, content in the supposition that, in all the capital of Islam, no man knew or cared who they were, two men and a girl leaned on the rail of the yacht's forward deck, and debated the highly important question of where they should dine.

Of the three, the Count Pagratide, lounging with a posture suggestive of the athlete at ease, lifted his head and revealed in his smile a gleam of white teeth under a dark, closely clipped mustache that contrasted strangely with

his lighter hair.

"What is the charge against the chef on board?" he inquired. His English bore a trace of accent, pleasing rather than faulty. The second man, who was the yacht owner and an American,

shrugged his shoulders.

"The vital question," he suggested, "seems less a matter of where we eat than when we eat. I begin to sympathize with the cannibal—which," he added, in a manner of bitter confession, "is neither enlightened nor civilized."

A physiognomy expert might have deduced the opinion that the two men had conspired to assume an unfelt gayety for the sake of the girl. When one looked at the girl, one realized that any assumption, any fraud, or even lying blackly for her pleasure, was, in the premises, amply justified. The same expert might have caught in the vivacity of the girl's laughter a hint that its merriment, too, came less from spontaneity than make-believe.

"We may never have another chance to dine in Constantinople," she ruled

sagely

"Which is an incident," suggested Benton, the American, "for which we may ultimately render large and cheer-

ful thanksgiving."

"Exactly so," argued the girl, "but we can't appreciate our deliverance until we've been delivered, can we? And we can't be delivered from something that hasn't happened."

From the depths of a steamer chair behind them, and the folds of a steamer rug, came the weakly protesting voice of the Countess Fernandez resuming her somewhat neglected duties as aunt and chaperon.

"I have always understood," she suggested, "that Constantinople, after nightfall, is none too safe for foreign-

ers. There are few lights, many beggars, more dogs, and numberless robbers—"

"Oh!" The girl's voice interrupted with a newborn enthusiasm. "It sounds fascinating!"

The men exchanged glances.

"That settles it," said the American in an undertone to Pagratide, as he held a match for the other's cigarette. "It's the City of Dogs for ours."

The girl turned toward them eyes

lighted with anticipation.

"Boys," she declared, "we will explore the Ottoman Empire." Confronting the older lady, she added: "You shall have an evening with your solitaire. Chaperons can't be expected to face such perils."

Then she disappeared, laughing, to

prepare for "shore leave."

In the slender grace of her poise, the unself-conscious tilt of her delicate chin, the charming curves of her lips, and the eyes that ranged between gray and violet, were written resoluteness, discouraging argument, and complete

absence of personal fear. Knowing this, the two men who loved her went for their hats without a protest, but each of them surreptitiously slipped a revolver into his coat pocket.

The Pera Palace Hotel stands in the European quarter of the town. To its doors your steps are guided by a trail of shop signs in English, French, German, and Greek, among which appear only occasionally characters in the native Arabic. When one has passed the porters at the door, in white linen and red fezzes, one feels as though he has stepped again into the ways of the West, except for the tiled arches, low divans, inlaid taborets, and the note of Eastern luxury maintained throughout the appointments. The concealed orchestra does the opera from Vienna, the souvenir post cards are made in Germany, the women's gowns are from the Rue de la Paix, yet it has been hardly a twelvemonth since a distinguished Turk, fresh from a Continental embassy, handed his luggage to these porters, and then dropped out of human sight and hearing into a truly Eastern oblivion, out of which no subsequent word has escaped.

Immediately after Benton's party had been seated in the dining room, Arab servants secluded a corner table close their own behind mushrabieh screens. The party for whom this distinguished aloofness had been arranged made its entrance through an unseen door, but the voices indicated that several were at table there. The Arab who served this table apart might have testified that one was an Englishman, wearing, in addition to European evening dress, the native tarboosh or fez. Also, that against the white shirt front glittered the Star of Galavia pendant from a red ribbon about the neck. The second diner wore one of the many elaborate uniforms that signify Ottoman officialdom. His eyes were small and piglike, and as he talked, no feature or gesture coming from the table where Cara sat escaped his appraising scrutiny.

There was one other behind the

mushrabieh screen. The niceties of his dress were Parisian, punctilious, perfect. In his right lapel was the unostentatious button of the Légion d'Honneur. As this third member of the party fingered his cigarette, his face twisted into a wry smile, pointing upward the waxed end of his small mustache, and his eyes, in sockets a trifle puffed, twinkled good-humoredly.

The Englishman spoke. "Much of your story, Monsieur Jusseret, is familiar to me, but the final chapter, in which you yourself participated, is all news. It will prove interesting in toto, I dare say, to our friend and ally here.

whom Allah preserve,"

There was a murmur of compliment from the Turk adding his assurance of interest, and the Frenchman took up

the thread of his narrative.

"We supposed that Karyl was dead—the throne of Galavia clear for Louis Delgado. Alas, we were in error!" The speaker shook his head in deep regret, as, turning to Martin, he added: "I believe you were in Cairo, Monsieur Martin, with Madame la Comtesse d'Astaride, when Louis the Dreamer, flushed with the triumph of announcing to the lady he loved that he was mounting the throne, told her that Karyl was dead. I believe you assisted her to decipher the code message?"

Martin nodded.

"It was a pardonable mistake," continued Jusseret. "Let us hope the announcement was merely premature." He lifted his wineglass with the air of one proposing a toast. "It becomes our duty to make that statement true. Messieurs, our success!"

When the three glasses had been set down, the Englishman questioned:

"How did it occur?"

In the smooth manner of an afterdinner narrative, Jusseret explained:

"You know how the palace at Puntal perches on the side of the rock overlooking the sea, and how the king's private suite has a small garden redeemed from the mountainside? I was myself in that garden on the evening we changed dynasties in Galavia. The work of preparation had been com-

plete, as it should always be in such cases, to the end that the revolution may be bloodless-or nearly so. The palace guard was with us. The king's household had been converted, and when the hour came to strike the blow, only one man close to Karyl's throne proved loyal to him. That one man was his adviser, Colonel Von Ritz.' He paused to laugh reminiscently. "Even the astute Von Ritz played into our hands by drawing his sword single-handed against us all. That gave the opportunity we needed. There was fighting, but some fool struck the king an ineffectual blow which only stunned him. I have said that only one man was loyal to Karyl. There again I was in error. There was also a Spaniard whose origin and motives are still unknown to us. His name was Manuel Blanco. He had slipped into the confidence of the conspirators so completely that he was intrusted with the command of the guard about the person of the king. This ally engineered a plan of escape by which he and Karyl made their way down the rock, and took to a boat. They were at the oars before their design was discovered. They were fired upon, and one of the two was killed. That is how the mistake arose. It was not the king."

The representative of France's Cabinct Noir paused as one who has

reached his climax.

"And now," supplemented the Englishman, "I dare say our new king feels an uncertainty of tenure so long as the

old king lives?"

There was a certain eloquence in the shrug of Jusseret's shoulders. "Louis Delgado"—he smiled—"whether he be grand duke or king, still merits his old sobriquet, 'Louis the Dreamer.'" He sighed a shade regretfully, then added: "One of the chief difficulties encountered by those of us who engage in the mad project of kingmaking, is the fact that we must so often work with poor material. Meantime Karyl lives, and his queen lives. Messieurs, we have wrecked Karyl's dynasty; it still devolves upon us in workmanlike fashion to clear away the débris."

Martin leaned forward and put his query like an attorney cross-examining a witness.

"Where was this queen when the

king was taken?"

"That," replied Jusseret, "is a question you must put to Von Ritz or Karyl. It would appear that Von Ritz suspected the end, and, wise as he is in the cards of diplomacy, resolved that should his king be taken, he would still hold his queen in reserve. We overlooked an item which he remembered. This kingdom does not hold to the Salic Law—a queen may reign. And so, you see, my colleagues," he summarized, "we, representing the plans of Europe, find ourselves confronted with questions unanswered and with matters yet to do."

Martin's tone was matter of fact. "After all," he said, "what are the odds, where the king was or where the queen was at a given time in the past, so long as we jolly well know where they are to-night?" Turning to the sultan's officer, he spoke rapidly: "You understand what is expected?" He pointed one hand to the party from the yacht. "The man with the dark mustache is King Karyl, whose incognito is the Count Pagratide. I dare say you have guessed that? He is the man who failed to remain dead. That failure is curable if you play your game." He paused. "The lady," he added, "has the misfortune to have been the Queen of Galavia. You understand, my brother?"

"And Galavia"—Jusseret dropped his voice to an undertone, as with an almost effeminate daintiness of gesture he laid one slender finger on the Turk's sleeve—"does not acknowledge the Salic Law."

Sanc Law.

When ways and means had been lengthily discussed, the Turk rose,

pushing back his chair.

"Your words are illuminating," he spoke, with a profound bow. "In serving you, I shall bring honor to my children, and my children's children."

With the Turkish gesture of farewell, his fingers touching his heart, his lips, his forehead, he withdrew. When he had gone, Martin turned to Jusseret. "Who is the American," he questioned, "on whom the queen casts her glance oftener than on Karyl? And how do they chance to be in refuge on a yacht that flies the American

flag?"

The Frenchman's face wore a puzzled frown. "That I should also like to know," he replied. "One can only guess. His name is Benton. You remember that before the marriage and coronation, both Karyl and the queen, incognito, of course, frequently visited America. You also remember that our earlier plan to dispose of Karyl was thwarted by an unknown, and that Louis Delgado was kidnapped at Monte Carlo on a yacht. Perhaps by adding up those incidents—" He broke off and shook his head.

"But why should a Yankee--"

The Frenchman interrupted with a laugh. "What charming innocence! May not even a Yankee love a beautiful woman? And you who inquire have served many governments, and wandered so widely that men have named you 'The English Jackal.'"

Martin flushed to his bronzed cheek bones, "As to what sobriquets my enemies have given me"—he spoke with deliberate and ominous coldness—"you will be good enough to hold your

tongue.'

Jusseret's apology was immediate and

complete.

Two hours later, alighting from a rickety victoria by the landing stage, Cara made her way between the two men, toward the waiting launch from the Isis. Filthy-looking Arabs, to the number of a dozen, rose out of the shadows and crowded about the trio, pleading piteously for baksheesh in the name of Allah. The party found itself forced back toward the carriage, and Benton fingered the grip of the revolver in his pocket as the other hand held the girl's arm. At the same moment there were a sudden clamor of shouting and the pattering of running feet. Then the throng of beggars dropped back under the pelting blows from the heavy naboots in the hands of official kawasses. or bodyguards. An instant later a stout Turk in official uniform broke through the confusion, shouting imprecations.

"Back, you children of swine!" he declaimed. "Back to your mires, you pigs! Do you dare to affront the great pashas?" Then, turning obsequiously, he bowed with profound apology. "It is a bitter sorrow that you should be annoyed," he assured them, "but it is over."

"To whom have we the honor of expressing our thanks?" smiled the Count

Pagratide.

The Osmanli responded with a deprecating gesture of self-effacement. "To one of the least of men," he said. "I am called Abdul Said Bey. I am the humble servant of his majesty the sultan—whom Allah preserve."

As the launch put off, the elliptical figure of Abdul Said Bey, on the lowest step of the landing, speeded its departure with a gesture of ceremonious farewell—fingers sweeping heart, lips,

and forehead.

When the reflected lights of the launch shimmered in vague downward shafts at a distance, he turned, and the scattered throng of beggars grouped about him with no remaining trace of fear.

"You will know them when you see them in the bazaars?" he demanded. "You shall be taught in time what is expected—likewise bastinadoed upon your bare soles if you fail. Now you have only to remember the faces of the infidels. Go!"

He swept out his hand, and the Bedouins scattered, like rats, into a dozen

dark places.

If the panorama of Constantinople fades from a lurid silhouette to a sooty monotone by night, it at least makes amends by day. Then the sun shining out of a sky of intense blue, on water vividly green, catches the tiled color chips of the sprawling town, glints on dome and minaret, and makes a city seen as in a kaleidoscope.

Her insatiable appetite for beauty had brought Cara on deck early. She wore a short walking skirt, and had

protected herself against a fresh tang of the morning air with a heavy blue sweater. The early shore wind tossed unruly brown curls across her eyes and the delicate pink of her cheeks.

When the yachtsman, also leaving his stateroom early, joined her, she was deep in a nautical discussion with one of the seamen whose task of swabbing the deck had been forgotten in the enthusiasm of enlightening her.

As she walked with Benton toward the stern she read in his eyes that he had been long awake and was deeply troubled. In the shadow of the after cabin she stopped him with a light touch on his arm.

"Now tell me," she demanded, "what

is the matter?"

He laughed, questioning in turn: "Is

anything the matter?"

She looked at him with frank directness as she brushed a truant lock from her cheeks and brow. "Your eyes say so,"

The man clamped his jaws together

and threw back his head.

"If you can read my eyes that far" -his voice was quiet, but betrayed a note of misery-"you can read them There is nothing in my farther. thoughts that you cannot read-so"he lifted the eyes in question, half despairing despite the smile he had schooled into them-"why rehearse it all again?"

Her face clouded, not in displeasure, but in sadness. Her lips drooped wistfully at the corners, and between her

brows came a delicate furrow.

He knew that expression, and could feel it with his own eyes averted, as a blind man may know when the sun has been clouded. He turned his gaze on the single dome and four minarets of the Mosque of Suleyman.

"Besides," he added, speaking in a steady monotone, "I couldn't tell it without saying 'I love you,' and that is

forbidden.

She watched his face, her own features wearing the stamp of a pain no less bitter than his own. The man wheeled to face her, and spoke with a

volcanic outburst of feeling that broke

through his self-repression.

"When I first told you that I loved you, you were as free to listen as I was to speak. I had the right to say"-he hesitated, and both hands went out in a comprehensive gesture-"I had the right to say all the things I felt, all the things that I could never put into words. And you-" For a moment he halted to control his voice, then in a tone of greater composure, went on: "And you had the right to answer."

The girl's eves met his own with the straightforward, unashamed directness

that was her characteristic.

"I told you then in answer to what you said-as I had the right to tell you then—that I loved you, too, that your love for me could not possibly be greater than mine for you." She spoke so softly that he might have missed the words, but for the fact that they were those words.

Not trusting himself to look at her while he spoke, he turned his gaze upon

the city's sky line.

"You told me, too," he said, with studied self-control, "that you longed to be the freest thing that had life under heaven. I wanted to give you that freedom, but stronger than love or hunger for freedom, you found your idea of duty and accepted the mandate of your birth, the throne you hated."

He broke off, and, fumbling in his pocket, drew out his handkerchief to wipe away the moisture that, despite the crispness of the morning air, had

gathered on his temples.

The girl looked out across the water. "Freedom!" she breathed hungrily, al-

most inaudibly.

"Having no choice, I bowed to your decision. I never consented. No man consents to live among the ruins of his life, to see the woman he loves living among the ruins of her life. But that is done! Then Fate, continuing its sardonic pleasantry"—a note of bitterness came into his voice-"selected me to defend the other man upon his throne. That edict also I accepted because I was not quite a murderer, and because"—the bitter note gave way to

one of tenderness-"because it was your throne, too." His voice rose suddenly in protest. "These things were hard enough to bear. I tried to bear them because your courage made me ashamed of my own cowardice, but when Destiny, not satisfied with its cruel jest, not satisfied with the toll it had exacted from both our lives, makes the sacrifice ineffectual, vain; when you and he are refugees wearing assumed names; when I find myself forgetting that you are not, in fact, Cara Carstow, that he is not Pagratide, your suitor, but Karyl, your husband; when I spend the hours choking back the words that rise to my lips, all words of love for you! My God!" A suffocating sense of the futility of speech cut short his rebellious rush of words.

For the space of several minutes they stood speechless, watching the gulls that swept past the bow of the yacht.

Finally she spoke.

"He has offered me my freedom. He always knew what you know, and it has been bitter for him, too. He feels that, since there is no longer a throne or a kingdom to enslave us, he has no right to hold me in a marriage that was a matter of statecraft and to which I was never able to give my heart's consent. But don't you see?" She turned vehemently, and laid both her hands upon his forearm. "Don't you see I can't accept my freedom now?" She looked at him with compelling intensity. "Why, now, now he is overthrown, defeated, heartbroken! Now it would be desertion! You wouldn't have me do it!"

He bowed his head. Later, she spoke again. Her voice would have trembled had she not summoned to the task of steadying it that passion of courage which was her religion. "You must go

away," she said.

His hands lying on the taffrail tightened until the knuckles stood out in white splotches, but he made no an-

swer.

Suddenly yielding to an emotion stronger than herself, she leaned forward and threw both arms about his neck.

"Don't you see?" she cried passion-

ately. "There is a limit to my powers of suffering and acquiescing. I must do what I have undertaken. If you are near, I can't." Then, as she looked at his rigid face, she added piteously: "But I love you, dear, for always." She drew back, speaking with self-contempt: "There, I have proved it, my weakness!"

The man turned toward her, and taking her hand in his own, raised it to

his lips.

"I wish I had your strength," he said, with a forced smile.

When she spoke again, the predominant note in her voice was weariness.

"My life," she said, "is a miserable series of calling on you and sending you away. Back there"—she waved her hand to the west—"it is summer—wonderful American summer! The woods are thick and green. The big rocks by the creek are all splotched yellow with the sun, and green with the moss. I wonder who rides Spartan now when the hounds are out!" She broke off suddenly, almost with a sob, then she shook her head sadly. "You see you must go," she added. "You will take my heart with you—but that is better than this."

She turned and led the way forward, and for the length of the deck he walked at her side in silence. As they halted he said very low: "And you?"

halted, he said very low: "And you?"

Her answering smile was wan.
"More than a little lonely." Then reverting to her old name for him, she laughed with counterfeited gayety. "As, Sir Gray Eyes, people must be, who try to be good."

The muezzin had called the devout to their prayer rugs for the third time that day, when the girl and the two men turned from the Stamboul end of Galata Bridge into the tawdry confusion of buildings that cluster about the Mosque of Yeni Djami. They were bound for the bazaars.

In a side street where the shops are a trifle larger than their neighbors, one Mohammed Abbas keeps his curio bazaar. With such flowery Orientalism did this acute merchant couch his invitation to inspect his wares that Cara turned into the shop. Cut off by pressure of the crowd, Pagratide, some paces back, caught a glimpse of her figure in the door and fought his way to her side.

Benton, who had stopped to price a bracelet of antique silver set with turquoises, lost sight of her. The girl had become interested in a quaint curved dagger and scabbard thickly studded

with semi-precious stones.

Mohammed Abbas urged her to see the rarer and more choice articles which he kept in an upper room. As they talked, a half dozen natives, swarthy and villainous of face, drifted into the shop, to be promptly ordered out by the proprietor, who used for that purpose a vocabulary of scope and vividness. They retreated, but not by the street door through which they had come. Instead, they left through a low, arched doorway to the rear.

Abbas led his customers to an upper room which they found dark except as he lighted it with hanging lamps as he went. Its space was generous, broken here and there by piles of ebony furniture inlaid with pearl, pieces of Saracenic armor, Damascened bucklers, and all the gear too large for the narrow

confines below.

Half an hour's searching through the chaos of wares failed to reveal the choice daggers which Mohammed wished to show madame, and with many apologies for added annoyance, he begged monsieur and madame to mount yet another flight and visit yet another storeroom. At the head of the stairs they encountered absolute darkness, and the shopman, with his everready apologies, paused again to light lamps.

As Pagratide's pupils accustomed themselves to the murk he noted that this last room was bare except for tapestries hung flat against the wall, and that at its farther side narrow slits of light showed along the sills of two doors. Turning, he noted the darker shadow of some recess in the wall im-

mediately to his left.

Suddenly Mohammed Abbas closed

the door upon the stairs, and clapped his hands, which, in all lands where Allah is worshiped, is a signal of summons. Thrusting his hand into the pocket where he had carried an automatic pistol, Karyl found it empty, and he remembered that on the stairway the merchant had apologized for jostling him. Then the two doors opposite opened, and framed against their light he caught a momentary picture of crowding Arabs:

Outside, Benton had been searching. First he had felt only annoyance for a chance separation, but when ten minutes of futile search had lengthened into fifteen, annoyance gave way to fear, and fear to panic. A dozen tragic stories of mysterious disappearances in Stamboul crowded like nightmares into his memory. At last, standing bewildered in the street, he caught sight of a familiar figure, a figure that filled him with astonishment and delight. In all their previous meetings there had been only hostility cloaked by studied politeness between the American and Karyl's staunchest ally, Colonel Von Ritz. Now, Benton saw in the man's soldierly bearing and quiet, impassive face, with its level mouth line, its resolute jaw angle, and its emotionless, unflinching eyes, all the reassuring strength of a relief party.

He shouldered his way to the side of the officer whose shadow clouded Louis Delgado's tenure of the throne.

Though the two men had parted in Cairo several weeks before, the Galavian greeted the other only with a formal bow, and an abrupt question: "Where are they?"

"I have lost them," replied Benton. He rapidly sketched the events of the last half hour, and declared his own

apprehensions.

With evidence of neither anxiety nor interest Von Ritz listened, and replied with a second question: "Have you seen Martin?"

Benton gave a palpable start. "Martin!" he ejaculated. "Why should Delgado's Jackal come to Constantinople?"

For reply Von Ritz permitted himself the rare indulgence of a smile.

"Karyl is here," he said briefly. "The pretender's Jackal may find it to his profit to follow the trail of the king, who endangers his master."

"And you-"

"It may be to the liking of the king's servant to follow the trail of the Jackal. I have followed from Puntal to Stamboul. Where he is, there is dan-

ger to Karyl."

As he spoke the figure of Martin emerged from a shop a few paces ahead, and without a backward glance cut diagonally across the narrow street, to disappear into the doorway of the curio shop which is kept by Mohammed Abbas.

When, after being delayed by a passing donkey train, Von Ritz and Benton entered the place, they found it empty except for a native salesman, but as the Galavian paused to make a trivial purchase, his listening ear caught the sound of a closing door, and the sound of feet above. Without hesitation, he wheeled and mounted the stairs with Benton at his heels.

While Cara and Karyl had been on the second floor, a heavy-featured Osmanli wearing the sultan's uniform had stood in the centre of the room above, looking about him with keen, piglike eyes, as he gave rapid commands to a half-dozen Arabs of villainous visage.

"You, Sayed Ayoub," he ordered, "take your pig of a self, and others like unto you, into that doorway by the stairs. Remain until you hear men enter from these two doors, facing the infidel dogs. Then come upon them from behind. The man is to be bound, and when evening comes— But that is later! Still, if he resists too much—" The speaker shrugged his heavy shoulders, and made a certain gesture.

"And the woman? What of her?"
The question came from a gigantic
Bedouin whose evil countenance was
made more sinister by one closed and
empty eve socket.

Abdul Said Bey nodded. "She is to be tenderly handled," he enjoined. "She, also, must disappear. That shall be my care."

There were steps on the stairs, and instantaneously the room emptied itself and became dark.

When Karyl heard the handclapping of the decoy shopman, and saw the responding ruffians in the opposite doors, he swiftly thrust the girl into the spot of blacker shadow at his back, and seized the shopkeeper's wrist with a force and suddenness that wrung from him a piteous wail.

Keeping the Turk before him as a shield, he backed toward the shadowed recess, with the one idea of shielding Cara. But the darker spot was the door behind which Sayed Ayoub lay in ambuscade, and, as Karyl reached it, it swung open, showing them against a background as bright as though they were painted on yellow canvas.

With his free arm he swept Cara into the doorway, wheeling quickly in front of her, and sent Mohammed Abbas lurching forward into the faces of the assailants led by Sayed Ayoub. Instantly, however, his arms were pinioned from behind by the reënforcements, and as he struggled frantically to turn his face, in an effort to see the girl, some thick fabric fell over his head, covering mouth and eyes, and stifling him into semi-consciousness and submission.

Seeing the man overwhelmed and borne to the door, Cara stood rigidly upright, white in the supreme height of voiceless anger. As the gigantic brute with the one sightless eye, and a greasy tarboosh, reached out his grimy hand and seized her, she reeled at the sickening shock of his touch and fell unconscious.

A few moments later, the "English Jackal" stood nonchalantly looking down at the bound figure of the former king as it lay on the floor, shoulders propped against the wall, head wrapped in a richly embroidered shawl from Persia.

"Oh, damn it!" he remarked. "He doesn't need to be both tied up and gagged, you know. He's quite safe."

He stuffed tobacco into his blunt bulldog pipe as he supervised the undoing of the smothering headcloth, and com-

placently looked at his prisoner.

Freed from the bandage, and drinking in again reviving breaths, Karyl awoke to the sense of his surroundings. His eyes at once swept the place for Cara, but he saw only the closed door of the room where she was detained.

Martin looked down, and as their

eyes met nodded casually.

"Sorry to inconvenience you," he commented affably, "but this is politics, you know. I happen to work for the other chap, King Louis." He smiled as he added: "And the other chap thinks that you are, to put it quite civilly, unnecessary." He smoked on reflectively, as Karyl, without reply, glared up into his face.

Suddenly the complacency deserted his features for a startled expression. With a violent oath he bent forward, listening. Karyl's ears caught the sound of feet on the stairs, instantly followed by a crash upon the door.

Martin drew a heavy revolver from a holster under his coat, and his voice ripped out orders with the sharp decision that had survived the days when he wore King Edward's uniform.

"Here, you beggars! To that door!" As the Bedouins swarmed forward there was a second crash, and the panels fell in, precipitating Von Ritz and Benton into a fierce swarm of human hornets.

Falling desperately upon the newcomers with swords, knives, and naboots, the bravos afforded them no time to take breath after their climb of the stairs.

Martin, standing with his pipe clamped between his teeth, deliberately cocked his weapon. Karyl raised his

voice.

"Von Ritz!" he called, but the Galavian and his companion, fighting to hold their own, did not hear, and the Englishman smiled.

"They are quite busy, you know," he drawled, in a half-apologetic tone. "Give them a bit of time."

Von Ritz was fighting with the blade

of his sword cane, while Benton, too closely pressed to make telling use of his pistol, was relying upon a loaded walking stick.

At last the Turks gave back, and, as Benton took advantage of the widened space and fired with deadly effect into the crowd, they turned, stampeding to the several doors. Then for the first time, the rescuers caught sight of the Englishman standing guard over the bound figure on the floor.

With the grim smile of one who recognizes the end and does not flinch, Martin deliberately leveled his revolver at Karyl's breast, and fired two shots

in rapid sequence.

A shade too late, Benton's pistol broke out with no seeming interval be-The Englishman tween its reports. swaved slightly, his face crimson with blood; then, propping himself weakly against the wall, he fired one ineffectual shot in reply. Slowly crumpling, his figure slipped to the floor, and lay huddled in a shapeless heap.

Von Ritz and Benton, kneeling at Karyl's side, raised his head from the floor as the wounded man vainly attempted to speak. His eyes turned inquiringly toward the other body. Benton caught the look, and nodded his

head.

"Dead," he affirmed, and the whitening lips smiled weakly as the head settled back against the officer's supporting shoulder after the fashion of a reassured child.

From the throat of Colonel Von Ritz came something like a sob.

"The king is dead," said the Gal-

The door opened, and several Bedouins retreated shamefaced and cowed before a heavy Turk who wore the sultan's uniform. His small, piglike eyes blazed with terrifying wrath. Looking about the room for a moment, he volcanically reviled them.

"You dogs! You pigs! You serpents!" he shrieked. "Your heads shall be thrown to the buzzards! Your children dishonored! You have dared to attack the foreign pashas! And you, Mohammed Abbas!" The shopkeeper

fell trembling to his knees. "Your filthy shop shall be pulled down about your ears. You make it a trap. Your feet shall be bastinadoed until you are a cripple for life!"

Then his rage choked him, and, wheeling, he walked over to Benton, contemptuously kicking the prostrate body of Martin Effendi as he went.

From every pore Abdul Said Bey exuded sympathy and commiseration. Scenting liberal baksheesh, he promised absolute secrecy for the affair, coupled with soothing assurance of private vengeance upon the surviving miscreants. Also he bewailed the disgrace that had fallen upon the empire by reason of such infamy.

In his anxiety for Cara, Benton left Von Ritz to adjust matters with the Turk, who, with profound courtesy and . amazing promptness, had closed carriages at a rear door, and caused his karasses to clear the alleyway of pry-

ing eyes,

When Benton reached the room where Cara had been left, it was deserted by the assassins' guards. With a sudden stopping of his heart, he saw her lying, apparently lifeless, on a stacked-up pile of rugs. With a terror which scarcely dared to investigate, he opened her sweater and laid his ear hesitatingly to her breast; then, reassured, he gave thanks for the anæsthetic of unconsciousness with which nature had blinded her to the tragedies beyond the door.

Two closed and curtained carriages drove across Galata Bridge, and in the mysterious quiet of Stamboul there was no ripple on the surface of affairs as other tourists haggled over a few piastres in the curio shop of Mohammed

Abbas.

Two weeks had passed, and the Isis cruised aimlessly westward. The Mediterranean stretched to the horizon, so placid that the froth from the wake washed languidly, almost lifelessly, on the blue surface, and a single cloud hung stationary in the softer blue of the sky. Wrapped in a steamer rug, her slender figure more slender in the sim-

ple lines of her black gown, Cara sat looking toward the receding coast line of Malta. So she had spent most of the hours since they had weighed anchor at Constantinople. On the deck

at her feet sat Benton.

At Piræus they had anchored long enough for Von Ritz to secure a copy of the Figaro several days old, and the men had read its report of the crowning of Louis at Puntal. The Isis had called at Malta, where the gray fortresses of Valetta frown out to sea, and Von Ritz had once more gone in quest of news.

That had been yesterday. Now the former adviser of the king uneasily paced the decks. Over his usually sphynxlike face brooded the troubled expression of one who confronts an unwelcome duty. Suddenly he halted before the girl's deck chair, and, schooling his voice with an effort, spoke in his old-time, even modulation. once he found it difficult to meet the eyes of the person he addressed.

"We have heretofore not spoken of things which we would all give many years of life to forget," he began, then added with feeling: "Only the sternest necessity could force me to do so now."

As he paused for permission to continue, the girl raised her eyes with a sad smile that had grown habitual.

"I have come," said Von Ritz, "to stand for an implacable Nemesis to you, and yet I should wish to be identified only with happiness in your thoughts. To me one thing always come first. The House of Galavia is my gospel:" He paused, and added gravely: "Louis Delgado has reaped his reward—he is

Benton's voice broke out in an ex-

plosive: "Thank God!"

Von Ritz stood a moment silent; then, dropping to one knee, he took the fingers that fell listlessly over the arm of the steamer chair and raised them to his

"Your majesty is Queen of Gala-

via.

Benton came to his feet, his hands clenched; then, with self-mastery, he stood back, breathing heavily.

Cara sat for a moment, only half comprehending; then, with a low moan, she leaned forward and covered her face with both hands.

"Forgive me," said Von Ritz, "I am

your Nemesis.'

Benton came over silently and knelt at the side of her chair. Neither spoke, but at last she raised her face and sat looking out at the water, then slowly one hand came out gropingly toward the American, and both of his own closed over it. Von Ritz stood wait-

When at last she spoke her voice was almost childlike, full of pleading.

"I thought," she said, "that all that was ended. I had thought that all that was left of life belonged just to me-

for my very own."

Von Ritz turned his head and his eves traveled northward and westward. where, somewhere beyond the horizon, lay his country, "Galavia needs you," he said, with grave simplicity. less you come to her aid there must be war or dismemberment. You will save your country."

She replied almost fiercely: "It is not my country! To me it means-

Von Ritz raised his hand supplicatingly. "It is my country," he said simply, "and—your duty. Its fate is in your hands."

The girl rose, swayed slightly, and, putting out one hand for support, stood with her black-gowned figure outlined slenderly against the white of the cabin wall, her eyes full of distressed irresolution.

"I must have time to think," she begged. "Will you leave me?"

Von Ritz bowed and retired.

She dropped exhaustedly into the chair again, and for a full half hour sat silent. Finally she turned toward the man who awaited her decision through what seemed decades of suspense, and her hands, trembling slightly, rested upon his damp hair and forehead.

"Dear," she said, in a voice hardly more than a whisper, "whatever I do -v hatever I decide-always and always, I love you!' Impulsively her arms closed about his head and pressed

his face to her breast where he could hear and feel the tumult of her heart. "You must go!" she said. "With you here there is nothing else in the world. I can see only you." Then, with a catch in her voice, she went on hastily: "You must not only go, but I must not know where you go. I must not be able to call you back, you must give me your word of honor." He attempted to speak, but she pressed her arms closer about him, smothering his words. "No," she said. "Listen! This time I decide forever. Three months from to-day you must be at the house of Cousin Van, over there in America where I first told you I loved youwhere we told each other!" She was talking half wildly. "My answer shall be there then. If I decide I have the right, I shall be there. If not-" She broke off with a shudder. "You must go! Dear, you must go! It is the only way you can help me."

A half hour later Benton turned to

the approaching Von Ritz.

"Colonel," he said steadily, "I sail for San Francisco by way of Suez, from the first port we reach. You will favor me by accepting the Isis as long as her majesty can use it."

Von Ritz met his eyes in silence, and

held out his hand.

About this time, in Paris, a small party of gentlemen, among whom were represented the national types of southern Europe, were engaged in informal discussion in a private suite of the Hotel Ritz overlooking the Place Vendôme. Upon a table, cleared of draperies and bric-à-brac, lay stretched a map of southern Europe, upon which a smaller peninsular, jutting into the Mediterranean, had been marked with certain experimental and revised boundaries in red, and blue, and black. room was thick with smoke from cigars and cigarettes, and through the amenities of much courtesy and compliment, the gentlemen of Europe's Cabinet Noir wrangled with insistence. Finally Monsieur Jusseret took the floor, and the others dropped respectfully into the attitude of listeners.

"It is hardly necessary," he began, "to discuss what has been done in Galavia. That is a stale story. Our governments, acting in concert, made it possible to remove Karyl and crown He smiled quietly. Louis." know how short a reign Louis enjoyed before death claimed him. Perhaps you do not know that his death was not unforeseen by me."

There was an outburst of exclamations under which France's representa-

tive remained unmoved.

"Our object," he explained coldly, "was the disruption of Galavia's integrity. In reducing the kingdom to a province, the supplanting of Karyl with Louis was essential only as one step. The instability of the government had to be shown to the world by more continuous disorders. It followed that the removal of Louis was equally necessarv."

Don Alphonso Rodriguez, bearing the secret credentials of his king, came to his feet with the hauteur of

offended dignity.

"The government of Spain," he said, with austere deliberation, "had the right to know what matters were being transacted. France appears to have assumed exclusive control. Is it too late to inquire of France"—he bent a chilling frown upon the smiling Jusseret-"what she now purposes?"

The more accomplished diplomat lifted his brows and hands in a depre-

cating gesture.
"Mon ami," he responded, with suavity, "you flatter me. What I have done is nothing. I have only paved the way. France does not care what flag flies over the governor-general's palace in Puntal, provided it be the flag of a nation in concert with France. France suggests that the governor-general should be a Galavian, and points to the one man, conspicuously capable-who happens to be," he added, with an amused laugh, "my particular enemy." "You mean Von Ritz?" The ques-

tion came from Italy's delegate. Jusseret bowed his head. "Von

Ritz," he affirmed.

Don Alphonso Rodriguez also

laughed. "And how do you purpose," he demanded, "to persuade this loyal adviser of Karyl to accept a deputyship at the hands of Karyl's enemies?

Again Jusseret smiled, "It will be Von Ritz or a foreigner," he explained. "When we have convinced him that his kingdom can be only a province in any event, that it may prosper under his guidance or suffer under a more oppressive hand, his patriotism will prove our ally,"

Benton worked his way slowly to San Francisco through the Far East. It is not difficult to avoid newspapers between Ismailia and Manila, and with the dogged determination to let the day set by Cara answer all the questions for his future, he had not sought tidings from Galavia.

Two days before the time set he arrived at the village from which he could glimpse through the woods the distant spots of terra cotta which were the roof tiles and gables of Idle Times. There the Van Bristows, Cara's American cousins, took their pleasure, after their transplanted Southern fashion, in home and hospitality.

The traveler registered at the village hotel, and, hiring a livery mount, turned into the well-remembered road over which he had ridden with her that other day when her horse fell at a fence in the hills, and they had stopped at a

farmer's log cabin for repairs.

It was only the end of September, but an early frost had flushed the woods and hillsides into a hint of the crimson and gold they were soon to wear. The fragrant blue mist of wood smoke drifted over the fields at the foot of the pine-ridged knobs. From somewhere to the left came the mellowed music of foxhounds. Riding slowly. the man came at length to an open space where a log cabin perched beyoud a fence on the slope. At this same fence her horse had fallen on that other day, and in his memory he saw her again standing on that same cabin porch.

With the mud and dust upon her of the Big Countree.

The same farmer sat as indolently now as then on the steps, but the setter dog, that started up to growl as he dismounted, was no longer the pup, playfully gnawing his master's boot heel. And that was only a year ago.

The farmer did not recognize him, but the profer of Benton's cigar case proved a sufficient credential, and a discussion of the weather appeared a satisfactory reason for being there. It was only a step from weather to crops, and in ten minutes the visitor was being shown over the place. When the rounds were made it was time to feed the stock and, saying good-by at the barn, the farmer left Benton to make his way alone to the cabin. Passing through the house from the back, he halted suddenly at the front door.

For, upright and slim, with a small, gauntleted hand resting on one of the rude posts of the porch, gazing off intently at the coloring west, stood an unmistakable figure in a black riding habit. Incredulous, suddenly stunned under the cumulative suspense of the past three months, he stood hesitant. Then the figure slowly turned, and as the old heartbreaking, heart-recompensing smile came to her lips and eyes, the girl held out both arms to him.

"Cara!" he cried. "For God's sake speak to me, I don't trust my eyes. Dearest, for God's sake speak!"

When she did speak it was with lips smothered against his shoulder, but convinced by the heart beating against his own, and the delicate play of her breath on his cheek, he felt, as once before he had felt, that words were superfluous. Finally he found time to ask:

"How long have you been here?"
"At Cousin Van's? I have been here six weeks," she answered, with demureness, "and I have found it very tiresome." Then, with her sudden transfiguring laughter, she looked up into his face. "Have you been touring with a large party?" she demanded.

The man looked at her blankly.

"Of course not. Why?" he ques-

"Because," she explained innocently, "I have always understood that 'he travels fastest who travels alone.'"

Benton's face had fallen into a scowl of deep misery.

"What is the matter?" she challenged.

"Six weeks!" he repeated dismally.
"Six weeks! Good Lord! Six weeks!"

"You shall have them back." Her eyes danced with the mischief that he had not seen in them for a year, "I shall make your weeks so long—"

"You can't!" he cried, seizing her in his arms. "For me you can only shorten weeks to minutes; it is absence from you that lengthens them."

They started down the path where her horse stood hitched beside his own. At the gate she halted him,

"Sir Poet Laureate," she suddenly asked, "do you remember the lines you used to quote, the lines about 'The Big Countree'?"

"I do," he asseverated, with fervor. Then, as though any portion of the world's population that might be looking on was a negligible quantity, he drew her close enough to quote in a low voice:

"And then I heard the swish of things, and in the door stood she,

With the mud and dust upon her of the Big Countree.

She stood and held the brush on high, and so she stayed a while,

The tears were sparkling in her eyes—but on her lips a smile."

She quickly placed one gauntleted hand over his lips and took up the quotation:

"'You won it by a length,' she said."

Suddenly remembering what their old name for Karyl had been, she omitted the final words, "from Thingum-Thingum-Thee." But the man broke in, finishing the quotation:

"Then my heart and soul went riding over Big Countree."





HO says I tell stories? Your mummies? Oh! You mean the sort that they print in books? Tell you one that is true?' Then it will have to be story. They are the real true.

a fairy story. They are the real true stories, if people understand them

properly.

We'd better go to the quiet corner of the bridge deck, where the captain said good children might play. That's the best place for stories. Certainly Lady Frances may come, too, if she will honor a poor story-teller. I can't say if Arthur and Maisie may sit on her lap. You must ask Lady Frances about that. Minnie and Elsie can sit on mine, because they are the next littlest. The rest had better sit round in a ring. Now we are all ready; and the story that I am going to tell you is truly true, if you understand it properly.

Long, long ago, in the good old days, when steamships hadn't been thought of, and clothes had only just come in, children didn't go to school, and nobody could read or write. So they didn't print stories, but sang them, and accompanied themselves on a harp.

In those days there was a story-teller whose name was John, the same as mine. They didn't call him a story-teller, but a bard; and I shall call him that, because the story is true.

Nobody thought very much of his song stories; and he didn't think very much of them himself, if you come to that. He only sang stories because he was poor, and had to do something to

earn a living. He didn't earn very much, because his stories weren't very new. Sometimes they were just old ones sung to new tunes. He wandered from village to village; and the villagers gave him something to eat and drink and a bed for the night, and now and then a penny. It was as much as his poor song stories were worth, and he didn't grumble; but he wished that he could think of one that was quite new. because then people would give him more: perhaps even a sheepskin. Sheepskins were the best Sunday clothes in those times. They sewed several together, and made two little holes for their arms, and a big hole for their heads.

He wished for years, and wasn't any better for it—or any worse—and then one day he met an old bard with a long, white beard, and long, white hair. He was very poor, and very thin, and very weak; and he had to lean on a stick when he walked, and on his harp when he sang. His songs were very wonderful, and if he had spent his time singing at the big villages they would have given him sheepskins, and he would have been rich; but he only thought of his songs, and sang anywhere and whenever a song came into

his head.

When he sang in the lonely places the trees bowed down to listen, and the rivers stopped running till he had done. When he sang to people they laughed and cried; and when he sang and told them to do things they did them.

When there was a war he played the harp and sang till the men ran for their spears and bows and arrows, and rushed out to fight. Once his people were afraid, and would not go to the battle; and then he started out alone. He did not take a spear, only his harp; and he walked on toward the enemy and sang a song about dying for his country. There were thousands of enemies, and they were going to kill him; but when his people heard the song their blood seemed to boil; and the men seized their weapons and ran after him and fought as if they were mad, till the enemy ran away. They said that he had saved his country, and asked him what reward he would have, but he stared at them, as if he was

"I have the song!" he said.

The bard who was called John heard of that; and then he knew where he had been wrong. He had only sung because he wanted sheepskins, and not because he loved to make beautiful songs. Afterward he knew better; and he did not sing just to get presents, but because he wanted to sing good songs.

Now, good songs are not very easy to make. They grow from little seeds as flowers do; and the seeds are called ideas. They grow in the head, not in the ground; and our bard—the one named John—did not seem as if he could find ideas that grew nicely. He asked the old bard where he found his; and the old bard said he didn't know. "Something put them into his head."

So John went about looking for something to put beautiful ideas into his head; and one night he found it. It was a fairy; and her name was Fancies. No, I don't mean Frances; but she would have been like Lady Frances if fairies ever grew big, so we will call her Lady Fancies.

He saw her first in a grassy glade surrounded by a circle of trees. It was a lovely night, and the stars were shining like little electric lamps in a big theatre. It was a fairy concert, and they called it grand opera. Some of the fairies were sitting on toadstools, and some in lily bells—they called them boxes—and Lady Fancies was sitting in an enormous lily bell in the front row. They called that the grand tier. The bard was sitting up in a tree. They called that the gallery.

Lady Fancies was dressed in gauzy blue cobwebs that the spiders spin for the fairies out of very fine silk. She had forget-me-nots in her hair; and round her neck she wore a string of diamonds. The fairy diamonds are dewdrops. I expect you know that. I

thought you would.

He looked and looked at her; and he knew at once that she was the only "something" in the world that could put beautiful ideas into his head. One came while he looked at her, and it grew into a song story in a night. It was about a white princess who sat on a crystal throne and ruled a troubled kingdom. There were traitors in the kingdom and enemies without; and the hearts of the enemies were as black as ink; and the hearts of the traitors were blacker. They plotted to kill the beautiful princess and rule the kingdom in their own wicked way; and first one and then another was chosen to do it: but one after the other, they didn't. For whenever they came near her she looked so beautiful and so good, and she spoke to them so sweetly that they felt ashamed of their black hearts, and wanted to be white as she was; and one by one their hearts grew whitish except the very worst; and even those changed to a smutty gray. So the traitors turned true, and the enemies turned into friends, and the troubles ceased; and the white princess sat on her throne and ruled the kingdom by her goodness and the love that people had for her.

When he sang that song the thought of the lovely fairy swelled his heart, and his heart swelled his voice, and he sang better than he had ever sung before; and people gave him great praise and a few pennies. He called the song an historical romance, and it ran into several editions. What are editions? Why, places for stories to run into, of course!

The next time he saw Lady Fancies she was riding on a big dragon fly—fairies use them for horses—in a place that they called a park. She stopped the fly to talk to some other fairies; and when she talked she smiled like—My dears, I can't tell you how she smiled! Like Lady Frances? Yes; but not the serious smile that Lady Frances is smiling now; a smile run-

ning over with laughing.

The bard noticed that the other fairies began to smile, too, while Lady Fancies talked to them, and grew much happier; and that put another story song into his head. It was about four fairies. One worked very hard, and one taught very hard, and one sang very hard, and the youngest neither worked, nor taught, nor sang, but just smiled at everybody; and when the king of the fairies came to reckon up the good that they had done to people in a whole year, he found that the fairy who smiled had done the most. That story was rather a sensible one, I think. It's astonishing what smiling will do. You children might try smiling at everybody all day to-morrow; and you'll see for yourselves how pleased they'll be!

It ran into many editions—you know now what they are—and on the front page he put, "To the Lady Who Smiled in the Park." You're quite right. There weren't any pages, and she was a fairy. I meant a fairy lady; and he didn't write it, only sang.

He went to the park often, so as to see the lovely fairy; and one day, when he was close by, he saw her pick up a little child who fell down in the mud. So he ran over to them and lent the fairy his big handkerchief to wipe the mud off the child. The fairy said:

"Thank you. But perhaps you like being kind to these little ones, and would rather not be thanked?" Well, he always did like little ones; but he liked them more after that. The fairy did more than put ideas into his head. She put them into his life. He is—I mean he was—very grateful to her. Oh, no! She didn't tell him the ideas. She did not speak to him again for sev-

eral years; and then she did not recognize him. What's that? Lady Frances thinks she did? Well, he would have been very proud if he had known; very proud! Anyhow, she did not tell him the ideas. He just looked at her; and dreamed of her—bards do a lot of dreaming—and the ideas came. Why didn't he talk to her? Why, because she lived in a beautiful place called society, and they don't let poor bards in.

He used to wait about and watch the places where she went, so that he could look at her and get ideas. He saw her many times; and the sight of her gave him many, many ideas; ideas more beautiful than the song stories that grew from them. I can't even remember all of them; but I recollect one very specially. He had to go away for a long time singing for his living-it was the time when he earned his first Sunday suit of sheepskins, and he almost thought they would let him into society then!—and, when he came back to try, he heard of a fairy wedding. bride was Lady Fancies. Whom did she marry? A personage. The wedding put a short song into his head. Some people say it was the best song he ever made. It was about a poor fool in cap and bells who saw his beautiful mistress married; and when the priests prayed for blessings on her he crept up behind them to pray, too; but they turned him out of the church, because he shivered so that he jingled his bells. It was rather a sad song. It made some people cry; and when the bard wrote it-but we won't talk of that.

He did not see Lady Fancies for some time after she was married. There was really no need to see her. She had put enough ideas into his head to last him all his life. When he did see her it was when a great crowd was watching a lot of soldiers marching off to a war. Some of the fairies were crying, but she wasn't. Her face was very, very white, but she managed to smile. An old lady who was near her said:

"Will they ever come back?" and she turned to her and smiled a little more. "If we knew they would never come back," she said, "we should still tell

them to go!"

That put an idea into the bard's head, but he didn't sing a song about it. He went and joined the volunteers the next day; and soon he went out to the war, too. He didn't do anything very great: but he did his duty. They made him an officer, and he got shot in the arm-by an arrow, of course. They had no guns in the good old days. By the time his wound got well the war was over. So he left the army. They gave him a medal because he had done his duty; and he was very grateful to the fairy for showing him that he ought to go and fight for his country; and he always said that she made a man of him. Oh, no! He wasn't a man before, only a bard.

When he came home again he saw the fairy only once for a long time. She was dressed in black, and they called her a widow fairy. She had lost two brothers and a lot of friends in the war, and she looked very sad.

"I am saddest," she said, "when I think that I said 'go'—and I am glad-

dest!"

That put another idea into his head, and he made another story song about it. He called it "The Trumpet Call."

The funny thing about the story is that there wasn't a trumpet in it! It was about a—a fairy with a soft, sweet voice who called to her own people to go out and fight for their country.

People liked that story, and gave him new Sunday sheepskins, and he grew quite well-off, for a bard, and quite respectable; but he never became grand enough to live in society and know the fairies. He might have got in by the back gate, perhaps; but he knew that they would look down upon him. What did you say? Oh! It was Lady Frances who said "no," was it? didn't mean fairies like Lady Frances, but ordinary fairies. It wasn't so much that Lady Fancies would look down on him, as that he looked up to her. After all, she was a fairy; and beautiful, and great, and rich, and good; and he was only a poor bard. He really wasn't grand enough to know her.

Sometimes he thought that he would try to speak to her just once, to tell her of all the good that she had done to him; but he didn't dare. So he thought and thought how he could let her know without presumption; and then one day he saw her playing with some very, very nice children; children whom he played with, too. Once or twice they both played with the children at the same time; and then they spoke a few words-the fairy and the man named John. He did not think that she remembered him; but Lady Frances says I am wrong. It was a great honor to him that she did.

The kind way she played with the nice little children gave him many ideas, and he wanted more than ever to thank her; and at last he had an idea of his own. It was this: He would tell the story to the children, and they would be sure to tell it to her; and when they had told her he thought that she would understand how—how very much he owed to her; and how very much he looked up to her from afar.

From very far.

Did he tell them the story? Yes, he did; and I suppose they told her, because she certainly knew. What did she say? Ah-h-h! That I don't know exactly; but I think it was something like this:

"Tell him that I have tried all my life to put good thoughts into people's heads; and I am glad if I have put them into his; and he may write about them if he likes."

I think, if I were a bard, I could make a story song out of a fairy who

said that.

There! That is the story; and it is quite true, if any one understands it properly. Lady Frances does! I hope the Fairy of Beautiful Fancies did, Lady Frances. For she made a man's life; and that is better than making stories or songs.

Hush, dears! I am not clever like Mr. Read, and I cannot tell stories properly; but I think I will try to tell you about the fairy. Yes, Mr. Read may listen, if he will understand what

I mean, and not what I say. I am not clever, and he is, and I am just a little

afraid of him.

Once upon a time there was a lady. Her name was Fancies. They called her that because she was very, very fanciful. One night she was at the grand opera, and she felt that some one was staring at her. She thought that he looked like a bard; and she knew that he had mistaken her for a fairy. It was because she wore a necklace of dewdrops, perhaps; but I think it was because he had ideas of his own, and he gave one of them to her.

Another time she saw him watching her in the park. I am afraid—she was a vain young lady, and she liked to be admired, and—I am afraid she smiled her best because she saw that he was

watching her.

Afterward she read a story—I mean she heard it sung—about a girl who smiled. She was vain enough to think that he meant her. The story had a great effect on Fancies, because she felt that the bard had mistaken her for—for what she ought to be. She made a prayer—knelt down by her bed and made a prayer—to be like that. The story did more to make her good than anything else that happened all her life; and she very much wanted to thank the bard.

She would have done it when he lent her the handkerchief, if he had stopped and talked to her; but he was foolish and shy and ran away, and she was foolish, too, and thought if he didn't talk to her when he had the chance, he didn't want to. Besides, she thought that, when he knew her, he noticed she hadn't any wings, and knew that she wasn't a fairy!

He went away and she didn't see him any more for a long time; and her people said that she must marry a per-

sonage. So she did.

She saw the bard at the wedding, and read his sad song story afterward. She was one of the people who cried over it. It was kind of him to wish her such good things; but they didn't come true. She always read his stories. They made her feel good. She always wanted to thank him, but he never gave her the chance. He was afraid of her, because he thought that she was a fairy. Yes, he was very silly! Mr. Read says that she was one? Well, Mr. Read doesn't know; and he mustn't interrupt.

She noticed him particularly when she was playing with the children—as I play with you—and when he played with them—as Mr. Read does. And when they gave her his message, she said— Now, I wonder what she said? I must remember very careful-

ly. I know!

"Tell him I am only a woman; but he thought I was a fairy, so I try to be one. I am very, very artful, and shall not let him find out my unfairness, if I can help it. But if he is not afraid, he can talk to me and try!"

And there's the bell for tea! We'll all go down together. Yes, you may come, too, Mr. Read—if you really want to? The question was disingenuous, as you say. It shows that I am not a fairy, only—yes—Lady Fancies! Are we not friends already? These many years?





Theatrical hostility that promises to benefit the public. More plays than ever promised for this season. What the warfare means to the consumer. The American dramatist's output. Promises of foreign successes. Some notable plays by Frenchmen Bataille's "Le Scandale" and "La Vierge Folle." A curious play by the author of "The Duel." Maugham's latest work "Smith." A quaint little piece by J. M. Barrie



N the midst of wars and rumors of wars with which the theatrical atmosphere has been charged, one note sounds clearly to all who are ready

to listen to it, and that is the note of promise to the playgoers of the country generally. This or that city or hamlet may be deprived of this or that favorite actor or favored play as the result of the tangled skein of bookings resulting from the hostile competition, but in general the result of the rivalry will be profit to the theatregoer, however expensive it may prove to the producer.

In this instance at least, the public is likely to be the least of the sufferers. Generally the consumer is ground between the upper and nether millstones; but the effect of the theatrical war, whatever it may otherwise prove to be, is certain to bring a variety of effort. More plays will be produced this season than ever before, and the effect of the strenuous competition will be such as to force each side to make the strongest possible effort to satisfy the public demand. We are likely to see the result not only in a greater number of plays, but in a greater attention to the details of production. Already the competition for actors' services has

been great, and it is apparent that every effort is being made to create interest in the personnels of the companies rather than in the presence of the mere star supported by "a bundle of sticks."

All this, though it will be expensive for the producer, will be good for the playgoer. And he, or she, as the case may be, is pretty sure to have a resultant profit in better entertainment, and more entertainment, from which to pick and choose.

It is already apparent from what has been underlined that there will be the usual number of lighter plays this season with musical comedy looming large in the prospectus, though here the competition has been so tremendous already that many are called and few are To be successful nowadays a chosen. musical comedy must unite a great number of attractive qualities, and the merely commonplace no longer stands the slightest chance of permanent pros-Again, in the more serious perity. form of entertainment, though great dramas are always rare, some unusual quality has come to be an essential for attracting patronage.

Managers undoubtedly recognize these facts, and were it possible, or were foresight always as good as their hindsight, they would always act in ac-

cordance with them. But the traffic in human brains does not always seem to obey general law. In practically every other commodity the ordinary economic principle of supply and demand may be trusted to occur. Here it does not follow. Though his intentions may be good the play producer may fail through one of two causes: First, he may not see as clearly as he thinks he does; secondly, though recognizing the dubious quality of what he has, he must still offer it, perforce, to keep his theatres open.

At this early season, it is practically impossible to foreshadow with any degree of certainty the ultimate result. Promises on the parts of the leading managers have been magnificent as usual. But the hired publicity pro-moters' grandiloquent tributes to the enterprise of their chiefs have not always been fulfilled to the letter.

This season again each of the principal operators has come forward with a long prospectus of what he intends to do, but the prospectuses should contain always the additional line, "sub-

ject to alteration."

Until they have actually appeared the newer works of the American dramatists-Thomas, Klein, Walter, Broadhurst, Pollock, Forbes, Smith, Crothers, and various others somewhat less widely known-may not be judged, of course. Here, too, promises are always splendid, performance sometimes disappointing. Mr. Thomas is this season to present finally his longexpected play upon the subject of "The Jew," and Mr. Klein will deal with "The Gamblers," presumably the more important type of criminal, as his plays may generally be trusted to point to some one and something higher up. And Mr. Forbes has already been among the early producers with "The Commuters," which will be described here after the curtain has actually risen on its New York premier. The others, and a host of lesser men and women ambitious to write the descriptive title "playwright" after their names, will be numerously active this season, as otherwise there will not be enough material to

keep even the New York houses open, to say nothing of the thousands of houses throughout the country that will be waiting for attractions. Left-overs from last season will be depended upon to fill out much of the time on the road. but fresh material will be wanted to

keep the pot a-boiling.

It is possible to present some general idea of the nature of a number of the more important productions promised. since they are plays that have already been tried abroad and come to us with a foreign reputation. This it may be understood is not always a touchstone of true worth, and tastes differ so greatly that foreign success as often as not precedes American failure. But the advantage is with the foreigners, for we are more catholic in our tastes than they are, and their plays stand a far better chance over here than ours stand with them.

Whatever the question of its ultimate popularity with the general theatregoer the serious-minded attendant of plays is pretty certain to be interested in "Le Scandale" by Monsieur Henri Bataille, the brilliant author of "Maman Colibris," "Ma Marche Nup-tiale," and "La Femme Nue." In each of the author's later plays, something of the poet has been interwoven with the dramatist and psychologist. Indeed, an observant Paris critic has gone so far as to predict that "Le Scandale" will live as one of the great plays

of to-day.

The scene is Luchon at the end of the season, with its cosmopolitan mixture of human elements, old and young, cynics and idealists. Charlotte Ferioul meets Artanezzo, and in the glamour of the lights and the light mode of living which the fashionable watering place engenders, she forgets, for the time being, her husband and her two children to whom she is still devoted. Artanesso has seen her twice and conquered her. and so beautifuly told is the confession of the woman that it does not repel sympathy, even though her sin may not be forgiven easily. Here the pliant French language and even more the flexible French moods are invaluable

essentials, difficult indeed to meet in our colder tongue.

Charlotte's lover quickly proves his worthlessness and all but demands money of her. She gives him her diamond ring and trouble has begun to brew. In the three acts that follow the woman is pursued by the folly of one day. Artanezzo is arrested as a swindler and Charlotte is summoned as a witness. And though she has long since ceased to see him his path runs parallel with hers, and she is slowly but surely tortured with fear of the ultimate sequences of her one false step. At last the husband finds out, and he is ready to shame his wife before every one. But he looks at her for a moment, decides to be silent, to live his life apart, suffer if need be, but save her the tragedy of exposure.

Then Charlotte goes to Paris to help the blackguard if she can, for at the last moment he has shown a trace of nobility and given her back her letters. The husband, pretending to believe the excuse she has invented for her absence. is in torment. When she returns shall he turn her out or go on living the life of seeming self-deception? He thinks of his own past, and eventually his doubts are set at rest. When she returns he pretends, and she pretends, that nothing stands between them, But the moment of mutual exposition comes at last; she breaks down, and falls at his feet, crying: "You know." He talks to her, talks as a husband, as a father, almost as a priest might talk to a sinner in confessional, and in the midst of it all, worn out in spirit and in mind, she falls asleep. The children rush noisily into the room. "Hush," the husband, "mother is asleep." After all little else can matter. Presumably neither will forget the past, but there will be forgiveness and the mutual striving to build stronger.

It is over a year since "Le Scandale" was produced in Paris, and in the meantime Monsieur Bataille has scored another great success with "La Vierge Folle," of which a prompt American production is promised. "La Vierge Folle" was produced at the Gymnase

Theatre last February. The "Foolish Virgin" of the play is Diane, the eighteen-year-old daughter of the Duc De Charance. She has been betrayed by Marcel Armaury; a married lawyer, whose wife is ignorant of the circumstance, as are Dianc's father and brother, Gaston. The facts come out in a conversation between the girl's mother and the priest, Abbé Roux, whose advice they have sought. The priest advises that the girl be sent to a nunnery, and she seemingly acquiesces, but runs away and joins Armaury, intending to take refuge in England.

At this point Madame Armaury discovers her husband's unfaithfulness, and Gaston arrives on the scene, having been advised in an anonymous letter of how matters stand. Here the wife becomes heroic. She fears for her husband's life, persuades the brother that he has been deceived, and even goes so far as to further her husband's escape with Diane. But the strain upon her has been too great, and as the curtain descends she faints away.

The family then fall back upon the idea of divorce, assuming that the law-yer's marriage to the girl following this will provide a coat of whitewash. The wife has been generosity itself to her husband, but the selfishness of the girl's family is too much for her patience.

"A man does not carry off a girl without her consent," she argues, and she defends her husband with a zeal-ousness that arouses all the ire of the girl's male relatives. Armaury will not fight a duel, so Gaston swears that he will kill him. And all the incidents from now on lead up to the "big scene."

In the fourth act in which the two stand face to face, Gaston draws his revolver, and the women fling themselves between the men. Then Diane admits the greatness of Madame Armaury's sacrifice, and Gaston begs her to emulate the wife's splendid example. But this is more than the girl can promise. She insists that he choose there and then between her and his wife. "Mais clle a de la race, Diane?" he says. And moved to the highest plane

of sacrificial feeling by the proud exaltation of having been preferred by the man she adores, she seizes *Gaston's* re-

volver and shoots herself.

Another French play of rather an unusual sort is promised in "Sire," by Monsieur Henri Lavedan, best known to our audiences by "The Duel," in which Otis Skinner acted a couple of seasons ago. Like that play, this one was first acted at the Comédie Francaise. Mademoiselle De Saint Salbi is a woman of sixty or thereabouts in the year 1848, and all her life she has been devoted to Louis XVII, whom she met as the dauphin when both of them were children. She is certain that he lives somewhere and that he will some day come back to her, and she feels that she could die happy if he would but kiss her hand. The woman has two good friends, the doctor and the abbé, and they decide to cure her of her delusion by indulging it. To that end they look about for a plausible Louis XVII, and find him in a wonderful watchmaker, Denis Roulette. He not only "looks the part," but has no end of accomplishments that will make him attractive.

On the success of this rôle the play, here will probably rise or fall. For the basis of the complications is too slight to be taken very seriously. Denis Roulette has a genius for getting mixed up in a lot of things, and besides carrying out the deception as regards his identity with Louis XVII, he soon finds himself in a plot to overthrow the reigning Louis Philippe and substitute the republic. Though mademoiselle is happy in her delusion, Denis eventually decides that he is playing a shabby trick on a generous old lady and seeks to find a means of going away without destroying her pleasant little dream.

The opportunity comes in the outbreak of the Revolution, but before long she knows the truth, and when he returns in the uniform of a National Guard she cannot find it in her heart to forgive him. In the end the nobility of his character asserts itself, and news comes to the little old lady that though he was not in fact a king, he could die like one, and in defense of one, for he

has given his life for the cause of Louis Philippe. The thing has picturesqueness surely, but it will require acting—fine, varied, sympathetic acting—to be effective "in our midst."

As Zoë Blundell in Mr. Pinero's "Midchannel" had her "tame robins" and ultimately came to grief through one of them, so the smart married woman in Mr. W. Somerset Maugham's "Smith" has what she is pleased to call a "poodle dog" or "tame cat." Successes in London have been as few as in America during the last year, but "Smith" has been counted one, Mr. Maugham's work is not unknown to American playgoers, who saw John Drew in his "Jack Straw," Ethel Barrymore in his "Lady Frederick," and Billie Burke in his "Mrs. Dot." Each of these seemed a little thinner to us than they did to the London public, but

each has served a purpose.

In "Smith" a young man comes back from Rhodesia, where he has become a successful farmer, and finds the London society, which he used to admire, rotten to the core. His sister is a woman of fashion, who flirts outrageously with a brainless boy, the tame cat previously referred to; his brother-inlaw is a brainless ass; and his sister's best friend cares for nothing but cigarettes and bridge. Where he looks for honesty and gentleness he finds only heartlessness and meanness. All the women about him have married from sordid motives, whereas he believes that women should marry only for love and to make good wives and mothers. Only one person in the whole outfit appeals to him-Smith, the little parlormaid—and so he proposes marriage to her, though he realizes, and she knows, the difference in their respective stations. And though she at first refuses. she falls into his arms in the end.

A curious little play which is underlined for this season bears the enigmatic title, "The Twelve Pound Look," but the reason will be clear enough after a brief exposition of the plot. As its author is J. M. Barrie, one naturally expects quaintness in the story and its handling as well as in the title. "The

Twelve Pound Look" tells of one Sir Harry Sims, newly made a knight, but by no means so much admired by one of his wives as his honorable handle might seem to promise. One night, some twelve years before the opening of the play, his first wife ran away, leaving behind her a note tantamount to a confession of infidelity, on the strength of which Sims, after a vain search for her, got a divorce. Then he married again, and Lady Sims is now about to be presented at court. She is in fact trying on her gown while Sir Harry is rehearsing the various features of the ceremonials through which they are expected to go on the august occasion. The pair are interrupted by the arrival of a typist—which by the way is a much better word than the one we use over here to distinguish the operator from the machine. has been engaged to send off Sir Harry's answers to numerous letters of congratulation on his new-found honors. And the typist to the man's immense surprise, if not ours, proves to be his long-lost first wife.

He presses her for an explanation of

why she ran away, and she confesses finally that she simply could not stand him any longer. She had no partner in her flight, was innocent of all wrongdoing, and is now living happy and contented with simple, unassuming people. But how did it happen, he inquires, that she chose that particular moment for going away and no other? She went, she says, as soon as she could get together enough money to buy a typewriter—that is to say just twelve pounds. And she warns him to beware when he looks into the new wife's eyes and sees there the twelve-pound look. Now she goes away, and Lady Sims comes in. And the first thing she does is to glance over at the typewriter with a strange, far-away expression in her face.

"Are those things expensive?" she

Imagine Sims' position!

"The Twelve Pound Look" ought .o prove a most amusing trifle. And come to think of it, there may be more than a joke in it, after all. There usually is in Barrie, even when he is at his quaintest.



THE APRIL BOUGHS

That moment when she knew
That all her faith held holiest
Was utterly untrue.

It was not then her heart broke— That night of prayer and tears When first she dared the thought of life Through all the empty years,

Oh, underneath the April boughs, She felt the blossoms stir, The careless mirth of yesterday Came near and smiled at her.

Old singing lingered in the wind,
Old joy came close again,
Oh, underneath those April boughs,
I think her heart broke then.
THEODOSIA GARRISON.



A very exceptional story shortly to appear in Ainslee's. Bernard Shaw is justly enthusiastic over "The Way of All Flesh," by Samuel Butler. Mary Roberts Rinehart offers another lively mystery story in "The Window at the White Cat." "The Royal Americans," by Mary Hallock Foote, well told and more human than the average historical novel. Not a very remarkable book is Robert W. Chambers' "Aifsa Paige." P. G. Wodehouse has a lively and entertaining story in "The Intrusion of Jimmy." Eugene P. Lyle, Junior, has another adventure tale in "Blaze Derringer." "The Native Born," by I. A. R. Wylie unsatisfactory in many ways



AST month we gave you a hint, in this department, of something big that was to come in the shape of a twopart story to run in the No-

vember and December numbers. We are reasonably certain that you will take more than a casual interest in the announcement that Mr. William J. Locke

is the author of this story.

Of course you know all about Mr. Locke; you wouldn't be readers of AINSLEE'S if you didn't find pleasure and diversion in good fiction, and with your taste for good fiction you have enjoyed his stories. Probably you made his acquaintance first in the pages of "The Beloved Vagabond," as most other people did, though it is possible that some of you had previously read "The Morals of Marcus Ordeyne." At all events, you know him now, and very likely you think you know what he is capable of.

But we think we have a surprise in store for you in this two-part story, "Viviette." We think you will be willing to admit, when you have read it, that Mr. Locke has outdone himself. It is a piece of work that can only be described as an inspiration, one of those flashes of genius that comes without

warning.

Of course, if you fail to read the story, you perhaps will not realize what you have missed—unless, when it is too late, you hear about it from somebody else—but at any rate you cannot say

that you had no chance.

There will be another story in the November Ainslee's that is worth special consideration here. The complete novel is always important, and "Behind Their Masques" is important for a variety of reasons. First of all, it is a story of the stage, a more or less original theme for a complete novel in Ainslee's, because it is difficult to get one that is good enough. Its author is Louise Closser Hâle. Mrs. Hale knows all about her subject. She is an experienced and finished actress and literary woman, and one who takes pride in her work.

The short stories, the work of Eden Phillpotts, E. Nesbit, J. W. Marshall, Jane W. Guthrie, A. A. Knipe, and others, are all of them up to the standard set by the stories of Mr. Locke and Mrs. Hale. If you find a story in the whole list that you do not like we wish you would write and tell us about it. We are only too glad to have our readers tell us what they think of the magazine, and with Mr. Locke's two-part story, Mr. Partridge's serial, and Mrs.

Hale's complete novel, you have an opportunity to free your mind to us and incidentally to tell us some pleasant things about AINSLEE'S. We think we are giving you a pretty good magazine, and hope, of course, that you agree with us.

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A book that is enthusiastically approved by Bernard Shaw is sure to be worth reading, if for no other reason than to satisfy one's curiosity as to Mr. Shaw's tastes in fiction.

A perusal of "The Way of All Flesh," by Samuel Butler, published by E. P. Dutton & Co. can leave one in no doubt as to the sincerity of Mr. Shaw's enthusiasm and will sufficiently supply the reasons for it.

But Mr. Shaw's opinion about the story is not nearly so interesting as the story itself. Among the announcements of the book by the publishers is one to the effect that the author devoted something like twenty years to the writing of it, and the result is proof enough that the time was not wasted.

The story covers the period of the first half of the Victorian era, dealing chiefly with the life history of Ernest Pontifex, a young representative of a middle-class English family. In the opening we are introduced to the young man's grandfather and father, the author's purpose being to give, by way of preface, an idea of the atmosphere into which the young man was born and the influences which were brought to bear upon the formation of his character. In some respects it is an old story, repeated everywhere and without end, of the blighting effects of the blindness and stupidity of the prejudices of maturity upon the character of youth.

Ernest's father and grandfather had no views of life in any of its manifestations which could truthfully be called their own. Their outlook was the traditional and conventional one, and they were, both of them, absolutely ruthless in their application of it to the helpless lad. Theobald, the boy's father, was a Church of England clergy-

man, one of a familiar type, accepted as a spiritual pastor but probably as unfit as can be imagined to direct and assist in the serious work of character building.

The result of all this is disastrous to the last degree to Ernest until a catastrophe sets him free from the slavery, and makes a man of him. The price he had to pay for it, high as it is, is none too high for his freedom.

Mr. Butler's style, though rather deliberate, is well suited to the character of the tale and is considerably brightened by a vein of satiric humor which runs through the whole book.

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Mary Roberts Rinehart has added another lively mystery story to her list. Her latest book is "The Window at the White Cat," published by the Bobbs-Merrill Company.

Mrs. Rinehart doesn't tell us specifically where the scene of her story is laid, but we are led to infer from various hints that are dropped that Pittsburg is the location. It is a story in which municipal politics, finance, and society are thoroughly mixed together, with a flavoring of murder, suicide, and graft

John Knox, who tells the story, with a humor that seems at times rather flippant considering the gravity of most of the events into which he is drawn, is a lawyer of some local reputation. At the very outset of the tale his aid is sought by a very charming young woman, who turns out to be the daughter of Allan Fleming, the State treasurer and a prominent member of a coterie of highly disrespectable politicians. The matter upon which she consults him is the mystery of the disappearance of her father.

He is sentimental enough to allow himself to be persuaded by her, and thus the story gets away with a flying start. One complication follows another rapidly—almost too rapidly, for, unless the thread of the tale is followed with the closest attention, the reader is apt to find himself enmeshed in a tangle of confusing detail from which he can extract himself only by retracing his steps. The detective, Hunter, is not very effective, partly, it must be confessed, because he is hampered by orders from his superiors, who seek to have the whole matter hushed up. Knox, therefore, finds the burden of solving the mystery thrown upon his shoulders, and finally succeeds, more by good luck and the weakness of Fleming's secretary, Wardrop, than by his own alertness.

The story is decidedly faulty in construction. If it had been condensed and more closely woven it would have been vastly improved and made easierreading. But, as mystery stories go, it will doubtless be quickly accepted.

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The title of Mary Hallock Foote's new book, published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., will, perhaps, recall Cooper's best-known tale, "The Last of the Mohicans," in which, as will be remembered, "The Royal Americans" played a prominent part, in the defense of Fort William Henry. Except for this, and the facts that the time and place of Cooper's story correspond with those of Mrs. Foote's "The Royal Americans," there is no similarity between the plots of the two books. Mrs. Foote's story also covers a period extending from the French and Indian War through the Revolution.

It is an historical novel, but it does not suffer from the faults of that type of fiction. The plot has a vitality of its own, and does not depend for its interest and action unduly upon historical events. It is more human than the average novel of this kind, chiefly because the characters are human; at any rate, the two principal ones are, because they are of Mrs. Foote's creature of the suffer of the su

tion.

Catherine Yelverton was born during Montcalm's attack on Fort Ontario, and her mother lost her life in consequence. She and her foster sister Charlotte were brought up in the neighborhood of Albany, among the Schuylers and under their influence, and it is in these surroundings that most of the action of the story takes place.

The dramatic elements of the story develop largely out of the character of Charlotte, whose history is unusual and more or less stormy. The love interest is a good deal complicated by the quixotic course of Dunbar, the hero, and Catherine's unsatisfactory experiences with an overscrupulous lover.

Mrs. Foote's stories are always well told, and this one is no exception.



Mr. Robert W. Chambers has, in his latest book, varied his output of fiction, by writing a story of the Civil War. In "Ailsa Paige," published by D. Appleton & Co., Mr. Chambers seems to have realized the necessity of getting away from the familiar type of Civil War stories, of which there have been so many, first and last, and of telling his story from a new angle. But it is almost too difficult a task even for one so skillful as he is.

The tale is too discursive, especially in its introductory chapters, which are so long drawn out that it threatens to become monotonous. From the time when Berkeley has his bitter interview with his mother's first husband, in the opening chapter, down to his decision to enlist, the narrative wanders rather aimlessly, and the appearance and disappearance of the multitude of characters is confusing and retards the action.

Most of it, which takes place in Brooklyn and New York, is devoted to the relations and doings of the characters, and we are led to believe that Berkeley, in spite of his youth, has wasted his life, though it is difficult to see exactly how. Ailsa Paige, a very youthful and very charming widow, meets him, and they fall in love, but because he believes himself to be illegitimate he tells her he can never marry. so they agree to a purely spiritual companionship. With his enlistment begins the war part of the story, and it follows the conventional lines pretty closely. Some of the fighting around Richmond, in the Peninsular campaign, is described, but the description is highly impressionistic. The love story of Berkeley and Ailsa is complicated by the familiar misunderstandings and the familiar villain. Ailsa volunteers as a hospital nurse, and has her share of adventures and disappointments. Berkeley undergoes wounds and hardships, but comes through it all safe and reformed, and a hero, an officer, and a gentleman. Needless to say how it all ends.

It is not a very remarkable book, but it will, of course, sell as well as any of

Mr. Chambers' novels.

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"The Intrusion of Jimmy," by P. G. Wodehouse, published by W. J. Watt & Co., is Mr. Wodehouse's second book.

It is an exceptionally lively and entertaining story, and one which affords substantial ground for confidence in the author's future work. The best thing about the story, from our point of view, is the evidence it affords of Mr. Wodehouse's independence of thought and of traditional methods. He is not likely, we should judge, to fall into any of the literary ruts that hamper and finally ruin a promising career.

"The Intrusion of Jimmy" sprightly romance, with just a suggestion of criminal mystery, enough to give it flavor and a character of its own. limmy Pitt is an aristocratic young Englishman, who, like some others of his class, has neither the means nor the training, nor, perhaps, the inclination to make him a useful member of society, and has found himself in New York, forced to take to journalism for a living. He falls in with a rather engaging crook named Spike Mullin, and the two have a number of adventures which bring upon them the unfavorable attention of the police.

Jimmy's fortunes, owing to the death of an English relative, take a turn for the better, and he finds himself improved in worldly matters as an English baronet. Returning to England, accompanied by Spike, he discovers among the English gentry an old acquaintance in the person of ex-Police Captain MacEchern, and some amusing complications follow, which are em-

phasized by Jimmy's fondness for the captain's daughter.

The story ends as such stories should. Jimmy and Mollie MacEchern are made happy, and Spike, the homesick New York tough, returns to his native town to become a prosperous politician.

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Eugene P. Lyle, Junior, has published another new book, through Doubleday, Page & Co., which he calls "Blaze Derringer." It tells the story of a young man's adventures in South America, adventures very much the same as those described in Richard Harding Davis' tale, "The White Mice."

Blaze Derringer, we infer, was so called because he had red hair and freckled eyelids; his baby name was Eddie, and he "left college at the instigation of the faculty." It was then that his education began,

He took the first train back to Texas, it is to be supposed because, like other Texans, he considered it "God's country," and when he reached home he found his father at the station superintending the shipment of a bunch of steers. On the way to the ranch in the old man's automobile the necessary explanations were made, and it came out that Eddie had thrashed one of the faculty who had intimated that the boy had not been strictly truthful. This pleased his father so much that he gave the boy five thousand dollars, and told him he could travel for a year.

Eddie is one of those very sophisticated youths whose knowledge of the world and its ways is almost beyond belief. The allotted year had hardly begun before he found himself engaged in a scheme to set free the president of a South American republic who had been imprisoned by his political oppo-The bulk of the book is devoted to the narrative of the complications in which Eddie became involved in his philanthropic attempt to set the prisoner free and get him out of the country with the fortune which he had accumulated. The president had a very attractive daughter.

It is hardly necessary to give the details of Eddie's achievements or to hint at the outcome. Readers who cannot guess correctly had better read the book.

In a short preface to "The Native Born," published by Bobbs-Merrill Company, the author, I. A. R' Wylie, admits that it is his first "serious liter-

ary effort."

The scene of the story is laid in India unfortunately, for either the author knows nothing about India or, if he does, he is unable to write convincingly about the country and its customs. With a few slight alterations the book might be made an American or an English story.

It contains the materials for a very good tale; the plot is original, and in the course of its development it reveals situations of more or less dramatic strength, but its construction is so weak and its lack of atmosphere so palpable that its possibilities are wasted. The characterization, also, is colorless.

Four characters furnish the material for the story: John Stafford, a young English officer; Lois Carruthers, who turns out later to be his half-sister; Nehal Singh, supposed to be a young Indian noble, and Beatrice Carey, an

English girl.

Some years prior to the opening of the tale, Stafford's father and mother together with Steven Carruthers had been killed in a native uprising, and their children had been left in charge of their friend, Colonel Carmichael, and his wife. The facts concerning this are told in a prologue.

At the beginning of the novel young

Stafford is introduced as a captain in the English army, Nehal Singh as the Rajah of Marut, Lois as the ward of Carmichael, and Beatrice Carey with her mother under the shadow of some mysterious scandal. The dénouement of the story discloses the true relations of the characters to each other. Nehal Singh is not an Indian at all, but the son of Steven Carruthers, who after his father's death had been adopted by the then rajah and made his heir. The latter's wife, seduced by the father of Stafford, is actually the mother of Lois Carruthers. It is a rather unlikely climax and not at all satisfactory.

Important New Books.

"Rest Harrow," Maurice Hewlett, Charles Scribner's Sons. "Mrs. Fitz," J. C. Snaith, Moffat, Yard &

Co.

"The Motor Maid," C. N. & A. M. Williamson, Doubleday, Page & Co.
"Once Upon a Time," Richard Harding Davis, Charles Scribner's Sons.

"Now," Charles Scribner's Sons.
"African Game Trails," Theodore Roosevelt, Charles Scribner's Sons.
"Masters of the Wheatlands," Harold Bindloss, F. A. Stokes Co.
"The House of Bondage," Reginald

Wright Kauffman, Moffat, Yard & Co.
"Sir George's Objection," Mrs. W. K. Clifford, Duffield & Co. "The Power and the Glory," Grace Mac-

Gowan Cooke, Doubleday, Page & Co. "An Affair of Dishonor," William William De Morgan, Henry Holt & Co.

"Happy Island," Jennette Lee, Century

"The Meddlings of Eve," William J. Hopkins, Houghton, Mifflin & Co. "Comrades of the Trails," G. E. Theodore Roberts, L. C. Page & Co. "His Hour," Elinor Glyn, D. Appleton &



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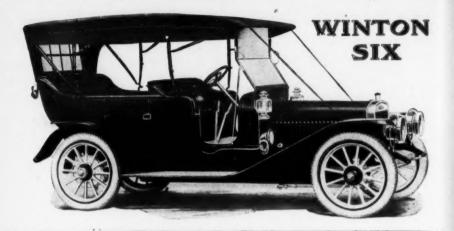
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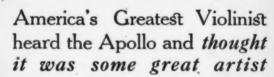
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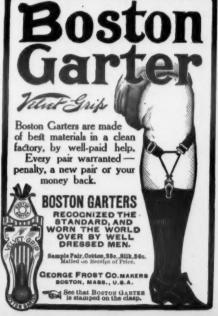
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These Gens are chemical white sapphire.
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IME PAYMENTS Write Dept. B. TIMES SQUARE NEW YORK



WOMAN'S CHIEF CHARM Joyed by thousands who use that great beautifier_tablachs. Its users are conspicuous at social functions, be-clause "it makes you look ten years younger" by preventing wrinkles, eliminating that shiny appearance and keeping the skin smooth and

Refuse substitutes. They may be dangerous. Flesh, White, Pink or Cream. 50c. a box, of druggists or by mail. Send 10c. for sample box. BEN. LEVY CO., French Perfum Dept. 40 195 Kingston St., Boston,





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Are coming. Also up to February next great special numbers of LIFE are the

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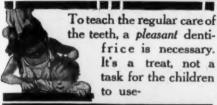
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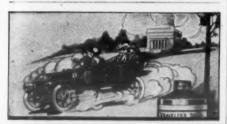
because of its delicious efficiency.

The antiseptic, anti-acid cream, that is delicious without the presence of sugar, efficient without "grit" and all that is beneficial without any injurious effect.

Trial tube for 4 cents

COLGATE & CO.,
Dept. A, 55 John St., N. Y.





DAGGETTAND RAMSDELL'S PERFECT COLD CREAM

This is the standard toilet cream of the world. Its international popularity is due to what one user has told another. It has been used constantly by refined women for 20 years as a "perfect" skin cleanser after motoring, shopping and traveling, as a "perfect" massage cream, and as a "perfect" massage cream, and as a "perfect" emollient for all skin troubles. It does not make hair grow. It does not turn yellow or rancid or dry the skin. Tubes, 10c, 25c, 50c, Jara, 35c, 60c, 86c, \$1.50.

FREE trial tube mailed free for the name of your dealer. Write today. Also free, our new booklet, "AFTER MOTORING—The Modern Clean-up." Address Dept. F.

DAGGETT & RAMSDELL,
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Williams Talc Powder

The Williams' Package contains nearly

15% more powder

than other kinds sold at the same price. This fact is valuable only because of the snowy whiteness, the airy lightness, the downy softness and absolute purity of Williams' Talc. Endorsed by physicians and nurses everywhere.

SAMPLE OFFER

A liberal sample inaminiature can mailed for 4 cents in stamps. Two odors, Violet and Carnation. Specify odor desired.



Hotel Somerset



COMMONWEALTH AVENUE AND CHARLESGATE EAST Boston, Mass.

A Select Hotel conducted on European Plan, Terrace Restaurant Open during Summer Months

Bookings for Fall and Winter may be made now

Special inducements for families and permanent guests

COMPLETE EQUIPMENT FOR BALLS, BANQUETS, CONCERTS AND SOCIAL EVENTS OF ALL KINDS

FRANK C. HALL, Manager

ONCE RICH, BUT DIED POOR

Former Banker and Mayor Ended Life as a Garbage Burner.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., Feb. 21.—Martin L. Sweet, former banker and prominent business man, and once Mayor of Grand Rapids, died suddenly today, on the 86th anniversary of his birth.

Mr. Sweet, who had been prominent in the milling and elevator business of the State, built Sweet's hotel here, founded the bank now known as the Old National Bank and at one time had large lumber interests. Unfortunate operations, however, sweet his fortune away and at the time of his death he was employed at the city gurbage incinerating plant at a small salary.

"Of all sad things of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, it might have been."

Had this man at age 60 invested \$10,000, in an ANNUITY in the National Life Insurance Company, he would have enjoyed, during every year of the remainder of his life, an annual income of \$944.90 and have received for the \$10,000, invested a total sum of \$24,567.40.

At age 65 \$10,000, will secure an annual income of \$1,135.20.

At age 70 \$10,000, will secure an annual income of \$1,364.60.

Have you taken thought for your advanced years and provided beyond all peradventure against such an occurrence as is related in the above clipping; if not, had you not better write at once for income that \$1,000. will secure at your age? Give date of birth.

Annuities written on both male and female lives at any age without examination.

NATIONAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY, OF VERMONT

ORGANIZED IN 1848.

ASSETS \$46,413,036,65

MAKLEY & GSELLER, General Managers,

· 149 Broadway, NEW YORK.

(A)

<u>C</u>

Choose Your Favorites

Then Speak for Them Quick!

IF you and the public could only see these 1911 "Pompeian Beauties" in their full sizes and true and beautiful colors, we could not begin to supply the demand 1 No advertising on the front; only the artist's name plate.

Actual Art Store value

\$1.50 to \$2.50 apiece. But each copy that you get is practically a gift. We charge only 15c apiece to protect ourselves from clamoring millions of "curiosity seekers."

Each "Pompeian Beauty" is by a popular artist and represents a type of woman whom Pompeian Massage Cream helps to make more beautiful by imparting a natural, fresh, youthful complexion.

(We have only a half million copies.) Who knows whether a half million or a million friends of Pompeian are eagerly waiting for this, our Annual Offer of 1911 "Pompeian Beauties?" Choose your favorites. Then speak quick!

"Pompeian Beauty" (A) by Turner. Size 17 in. by 12 in. Turner's "Pompeian Beauty" amiles straight at you. She is irresistible

with her feminine softness of contour and bloom of healthy happiness. Art value \$1.50 to \$2.50. Price 15 cents.

Price 15 cen

(D)

"Pompeian Beauty" (B) by Warde Traver. Size 19 in. by 12 in. This exquisite profile of Traver's typical American gid makes hardened bachelors exclain, "If I could only meet a gueen like that!" While women enthuse, "If I could only have a complexion like hees!" Art value \$1.50 to \$2.50. Price 15 cents.

"Pompeian Beauty" (C) by Everett Johnson. Size 32 in. by 8 in. The original of this Art Panel would cost you nearly \$1,000. Artisate Art Panel would cost you nearly \$1,000. Artisate Gleare it a daring yet wholly artistic color treatment. The wonderful green shade of "Pompeian Beauty" is "Gessen almost stardes you at first. Yet each day the picture seems more worth the having. Mr. Johnson is an American artist living in Paris, Art value \$1,500 to \$2,500. Price 15 cents.

"Pompeian Beauty" (D) by Forbes. 35 in by 7 in. Picture lovers can't get enough of this hart Panel. It went into a quarter of a million homes last year, and still the public cries for more. As far as we know, this "Pompeian Beauty" is the most popular Art Panel ever issued. The combination of lavender-and-gold seems to hit the popular fancy to an astonishing degree. Art value 31,50 to 32,50. Price 15 cents.



POMPEIAN



Massage Cream



Our Guarantee. If you are not satisfied that each copy of any "Pompelan Beauty" has an actual Art Store value of from \$1.50 to \$2.50, or if for any reason you are disappointed, we will return your money.

NOTE. The handsome frames are only peinted on pictures A and B.



Small Cost of Good Looks-For Man or Woman

What man or woman would not pay Ic. a day to look his or her best? At a cost of less than Ic a day several million men and women are "looking their best" through the aid of Pompeian Massage Cream. Moreover, it is so easy to apply, so refreshing in its effects, so cleaning and so beneficial to the skin, that one soon looks forward to each Pompeian Massage as a true pleasure rather than a duty. A clear, clean, fresh-looking skin is a good asset in business or society. Pompeian gives those results. Pompeian is rubbed on the face,

well into the pores and then rubbed out. Nothing is left on the skin. It brings out hidden pore-dirt that causes black-heads and other blemishes. Pompeian, through its hygienic massage action, stimulates the muscles of the face, thus imparting a healthy, natural glow.

"Don't envy a good complexion; use Pompeian and have one."

Trial jar sent for 6c., coin or stamps. Use Coupon. You may order trial jar or pictures, or both.

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you then get no reply, write us, for mails nell
miscarry and we do replace all good lost or
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may order as many pactures as you with for yourself or friends.



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AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE

A New Story by

WILLIAM J. LOCKE

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For the FIRST PART of

"VIVIETTE"

This is Mr. Locke's latest novel, and is the most intensely dramatic story he has ever written.

A United Nation

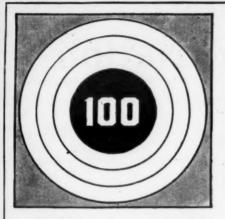
Millions of people touch elbows and are kept in constant personal contact by the Bell System.

There are all kinds of people, but only one kind of telephone service that brings them all together. They have varying needs, an infinite variety, but the same Bell system and the same Bell telephone fits them all.

Each Bell Station, no matter where located, is virtually the center of the system, readily connected with other stations, whether one or a thousand miles away.

Only by such a universal system can a nation be bound together.

AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES





Hitting the Bull's Eye

BUYING fire insurance ought to be like rifle practice. The aim should be for the Hartford. The value of a fire insurance policy is not altogether dependent upon the promises which it contains, nor upon the financial resources back of it. Its value depends largely upon the character and methods of the company which issues it. It is for this reason that we place the Hartford as the bull's eye of the insurance target.

You aim for the best when you select a bank or take a partner in business. Why not do this in fire insurance?

Aiming for the **Hartford** and getting it gives you the perfect score. It costs no more in effort to aim for this perfect insurance: it costs no more in money to get a **Hartford** policy.

Our aim in this advertising is to get property owners to use the same foresight about fire insurance that they do about other business matters. We will register a high score if we succeed.

As a property owner who ought to have the best insurance, demand a **Hartford** policy. Aim for the bull's eye. A little steady persistence and the prize is yours. Aim now by using this coupon.



-	 1910
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When my fire insurance expires, please see that I get a policy in the ${\bf Hartford.}$

Name-

Address



Learn this little kink and your collar troubles are over

Once you learn the simple Notch way you'll never bother with button holes. Wear a flat head button like this and get a Notch collar with an end that looks like this Then cut this advertisement out and put it on your dresser where you can see it when you do this:



Put the onter fold under head of button.

Press button out with finger, bring notch end over and notch it on.

Then raise outer fold, bend long end of band inward and shore it under.

It is easy to put on, but even easier to take off. The buttonhole that rips out has been eliminated. It is the only close-fitting collar that stays closed, and it has ample tie space. To take it off, just put finger under long end and flip off.

Cut this out and place it on your dresser.

It is made in all the most fashionable models in the famous

ARROW COLLARS



At your dealer's-15c each, 2 for 25c. In Canada 20c each, 3 for 50c.

Cluett, Peabody & Co., Makers, Troy, N. Y.



In old times, a soft skin and a fine complexion were accounted among the leading essentials of beauty; and so they are today. They knew in old times that the kind of beauty that is natural is a thousand times more admired than beauty that is artificial; and they know it today also.

The great difference between old times and now in this matter of beauty is this: in old times—that is, before 1789—they had no

Pears' Soap

to afford natural aid to natural beauty, whereas today PEARS is here, making the preservation and improvement of complexion, and of skin health and skin beauty generally, an easy daily habit—just the habit of the daily use of PEARS, that is all. This is one great reason why there are so many more beautiful women to be seen today than ever there were.

The best beautifying forces of both old times and new are united in Pears



bringing out the natural loveliness of complexion which is woman's chief charm.

OF ALL SCENTED SOAPS PEARS' OTTO OF ROSE IS THE BEST. "All rights secured."



Compare Fairy with Other White Soaps

You will find that Fairy Soap is white and stays white, while the other so-called white soaps will turn yellow with age. Fairy has a delicate, refreshing smell, while all other white soaps have a greasy, soapy odor. Fairy is made in the handy, oval cake which just fits the hand, while the others cling with old-fogy tenacity to the awkward, oblong, out-of-date bar which has to be cut in two to be handled at all.

And when it comes to quality and price-Fairy is just as good as it looks and costs but 5c.

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A Steady Hand

A.Keen Eye

A Clear Brain

Combine to "make a hit" in the field of sport and more surely in the field of business.

If coffee interferes-and it does with many-stop and use well-made

POSTUM

Then comes the steady nerves and brain absolutely essential to success.

"There's a Reason"

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